

The Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo (1261-1517): History and Tradition in the Mamluk Court

by

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the two-and-a-half century evolution of Islam's most prominent leadership institution, the Abbasid caliphate, after its restoration in Cairo following the Mongol destruction of Baghdad in 1258. Kept under the supervision of the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria (1250-1517), modern scholars tend to conclude that this so-called Abbasid "shadow" caliphate merely legitimized Mamluk rulers and little else within their society. Despite having shed much of its original power by the Mamluk period, the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo retained a definite measure of religious authority and enjoyed the reverence of significant sectors of the Cairene population including religious scholars, chroniclers, chancery scribes, poets, travelers, and, it seems, enjoyed even wider resonance among the masses of the local Muslim citizenry.

A dynastic study of the Cairo Abbasids combined with analysis of contemporary opinions of the caliphate and its Mamluk sponsors rendered from juristic writing, advice literature, historiography, bureaucratic literature, and administrative documents allows

the present study to move toward a comprehensive delineation of the significance of the revived office to the society in which it functioned. Although the caliphs as individuals were largely disposable and powerless, the office they held retained importance throughout the Mamluk period and contributed to larger civilizational understandings of “Caliphate” that allowed the inclusion of the Mamluk regime and its various administrative subdivisions.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ
 نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِنْ أَجْرٍ عَظِيمٍ

Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you -- they are actually pledging allegiance to God. The hand of God is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised God – will receive a great reward.

(Qur’ān 48:10)

“Know that faith and knowledge accompany the caliphate, wherever it may be.”

–Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 1505)

The likes of me live by dying, and in passing on, attain their desires. For [the Mamluks] is a succulent life, while I am left to merry speech. They are the possessors of outright kingship, while “for Sulaymān is the wind.”

-Words attributed to the third Abbasid caliph of Cairo, Sulaymān al-Mustakfī billāh (d. 1340)

There are no more virtuous people, *or even good people*, left to be sought after; nor is there a generous person remaining to whom I can convey my melancholy.

People of no lineage have become the masters
and I am forlorn for having lived to see these days.

-Verses attributed to the last Abbasid caliph of Cairo, al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘llāh III (d. 1543)

When modern man ceased to accord first place to religion in his own concerns, he also ceased to believe that other men, in other times, could ever truly have done so, and so he began to re-examine the great religious movements of the past in search of interest and motives acceptable to modern minds.

-Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins*, 136.

For my family

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Note on Transliteration and Style

In the transliteration of Arabic and Persian words, I have adopted the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* with some minor modifications. The doubled Arabic letter *yā'* (with *shadda*) is transliterated by an *i* followed by two *ys*, and the Arabic letter *tā' marbūṭa* is transliterated with a single *a* at the end of the word instead of *ah*. Thus “Taymiyya” instead of “Taymīyah”. Words which end in *tā' marbūṭa* which are also part of an Arabic grammatical construction, end in *-t* rather than *-a*, such as: Dawlat al-‘Abbāsiyya.

Terms that are commonly used in the English language, such as “caliph”, “amir”, or “qadi” have not been transliterated or italicized. In the bibliography, notes, and in general matters of style, I have consulted the 16th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

In the case of common Mamluk names for sultans and amirs, I have chosen the most frequent spellings of those names generally agreed upon by Mamlukists in articles published by the *Mamlūk Studies Review*. Thus Qalāwūn not Qala’un and Jaqmaq not Çakmak.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Sources

Introduction

The Mongol invasions of the mid-thirteenth century kicked off a tumultuous period of political fragmentation and uncertainty in the Islamic world. In much of the former territory of the Abbasid caliphate, even in regions such as the Mamluk domains (which never experienced direct Mongol rule), the political actors and scholars of the age viewed past tradition as a path to survive the upheaval. Carl Petry has observed:

Following the invasions from Central Asia occurring between 1200-1400, resurgent regimes sought to resurrect traditions of cultural unity dating back to the classical era (ca. the seventh to the tenth centuries). Since in the aftermath of this invasion era, change was regarded as more apt to disturb or disorient than to invigorate or renew, most sophisticated governments looked back nostalgically to venerated achievements of a perceived golden age rather than forward toward a future clouded by uncertainties. Maintenance of stasis assured continuity of political systems and promoted the survival of hallowed customs.¹

In the Later Middle Period of Islam (1250-1500), which happens to coincide rather neatly with the span of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (1250-1517), the late Marshall Hodgson has described the Islamic world as striving to transcend political fragmentation, by solidifying its “expectations and expressions of social and cultural life.”² Overall, these efforts succeeded: the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries remained a period of unexpectedly high continuity with earlier times despite dramatically changed conditions.³

¹ Carl F. Petry, “Late Mamlūk Military Institution and Innovation,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 463. Petry continues, “Caretaker of the Abbasid caliph, the Mamluk sultanate posed as custodian of Sunnism in the tradition of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.”

² Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (University of Chicago Press, 1974), 371.

³ Ibid., 2:3-4, 371; idem, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 180. In contrast to Hodgson’s civilizational approach, Jonathan Berkey has contested the idea that Islamic society became intellectually or culturally stagnant in the Later Middle Period, and argues that cultural traditions retained vibrancy and dynamism in the medieval and Islamic Middle East. While Hodgson considered social institutions to be in a state of flux, Berkey suggests that the Mamluks may have contributed to “the emergence and acceptance of practices and convictions which became characteristic of a broadly defined Islam.” Embracing the notion that Islam was not a monolithic concept or religion, may facilitate a more open and flexible view of Muslim societies in this period. See: Jonathan P. Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 93-4; idem, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 184; idem, “The Mamluks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 165-8.

According to historian John Voll, the real foundation of the Islamic World after the mid-thirteenth century was “its dimension of social legitimation and boundary definition.”⁴ Loyalty to a single Islamic empire under the symbolic leadership of the Abbasid caliphate was severely challenged after the Mongol invasions. The remnants of Islamic society, centered about either the Mamluk sultanate or the empire based around Delhi,⁵ held themselves together by the Islamic *sharī‘a* religious law as well as the social cohesion provided by the influence of Sufi *ṭarīqa* brotherhoods.⁶ The expectations and etiquette of a *sharī‘a*-based society had been established by the end of the earlier Abbasid period and the legal-religious status of the average Muslim was guaranteed through the ruling elite’s patronage of the ‘*ulamā*’.⁷ Maintaining and preserving the notion of the unified Muslim faith community (*umma*) became the constituting principle of the Islamic society and for many Sunni Muslims, even as late as the early sixteenth century, the Abbasid caliphate represented communal identity and the old “international Islamic order,” to borrow another Hodgsonian idiom.

Nevertheless, conventional histories of Islam often assume that the declining Abbasid caliphate received its *coup de grâce* with the Mongol capture of Baghdad in 1258 and subsequent execution of the “last caliph al-Musta‘*ṣ*im,” even though the dynasty in fact endured for another quarter century under the protection of the Mamluk sultans in Egypt. If it is dealt with at all, the final chapter of the Abbasid dynasty has been relegated to footnotes. Most modern studies dismiss the Abbasids of Cairo as political subterfuge used to strengthen the legitimacy of the Mamluk slave-kings *vis-à-vis* their many rivals. The majority of scholarly discussion has centered about the installation of the first caliphs of Cairo by the sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (657-76/1260-77) and its political ramifications, with little else said about the office itself or the fate of the dynasty in Mamluk Egypt.

The lacunae in the body of research have left many unanswered questions. What role did the Abbasid caliphate *by itself* play in the religious life of Mamluk society? How did the scholastic class understand the changed conditions of both the caliphate and Islamdom’s traditional relationship with the Abbasid family? What pressures demanded an unbroken caliphate -- pressures that the Mamluks evidently could not ignore? What prevented the sultans

⁴ John O. Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Islamic Studies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (SAGE: Los Angeles, 2010), 7-8.

⁵ Indian scholars argue that after the Mongols conquered Iran, not Cairo but Delhi emerged as the last refuge of Islamic civilization. See: Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, 173.

⁶ Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:371; idem, *Rethinking World History*, 184-8, 193; Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” 9-10; Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 1-2.

⁷ Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:119-25; idem, *Rethinking World History*, 185.

from simply ending the caliphate, even though they seemed to hold the real power? What necessitated that the caliphal office always be held by a descendant of the prophet Muḥammad's uncle al-ʿAbbās, even in Cairo? What resonance did the caliphate hold among the Cairene masses? Why did disaffected members of the Mamluk establishment attempt to rally behind Abbasid caliphs from time to time? What else, in light of the caliph's presence, can be known about the culture of Mamluk Cairo as the new cultural hearth of Sunni Islam?

We may put the relative lack of interest in the Abbasids of Cairo down to a wholesale dismissal of the dynasty's relevance. Nevertheless, amidst the great tumult of Mamluk politics as the sultans and their amirs (a distinct social group among Egyptian society) struggled, rose, and fell, the Abbasid caliph remained an enduring, albeit somewhat muted, source of religio-political authority, legitimacy, and continuity. The existence of a caliph under Mamluk protection adorned Cairo with imperial prestige and made it a beacon for Sunni Islam in the post-Mongol world.

In 2009, Jonathan Berkey identified "a well-developed scholarly literature analyzing the historical significance of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo" which warrants further exploration and classification.⁸

Early Observations of the Cairo Caliphate

When early modern orientalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began studying the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria, the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo simultaneously fell under their lens.⁹ Important early surveys of the period by contemporaries Gustav Weil, Sir William Muir, and Stanley Lane-Poole drew attention to the continuation of the Abbasid line at Cairo which Baybars had reestablished "in order to emphasize his position as the pre-eminent sultan of Islam."¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Abbasid caliphate was quickly dubbed a "puppet" or "shadow caliphate," terms, it must be mentioned, with no Arabic counterparts in Mamluk historical sources.¹¹ This "shadow caliphate" of the Mamluks, developed as convenient shorthand in modern studies to describe the seemingly powerless position of the caliphs as well as the shadowy mystery hovering over their role in Mamluk society. Weil's somewhat misleading title,

⁸ Jonathan P. Berkey, "Mamluk Religious Policy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 11.

⁹ For a survey of the history of Mamluk studies in modern academia, see: Robert Irwin, "Under Western Eyes: A History of Mamluk Studies," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 27-51.

¹⁰ Stanley Lane-Poole, *A History of Egypt in the Middle Ages* (New York: Haskel House, 1969), 264.

¹¹ For reference to the "shadow" Abbasids of Cairo see: W. Muir, *The Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt: A History of Egypt from the Fall of the Ayyubite Dynasty to the Conquest by the Osmanlis, A.D. 1260-1517* (London, 1896), 16, 30, 64; idem, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (London, 1898), 599; Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Mohammadan Dynasties: Chronological and Genealogical Tables with Historical Introductions* (Paris: P. Geunther, 1925), 3; Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, tr. P. M. Holt (London: Longman, 1992), 110.

Geschichte des Abbasidenchalifats in Egypten, was instead a two-volume history of the Mamluk sultanate, though not without interjections concerning the Abbasid caliphs of the period.¹² The work of Muir, who relied on Weil for the caliphate in the Mamluk era,¹³ considered the subplot of the transplanted caliphs a point of interest in Mamluk history and, in the same fashion, devoted several pages of his narrative to prominent events surrounding the caliphate in Mamluk politics.¹⁴ In his study of the Mamluk sultans, Muir explained the presence of the institution in Cairo:

[Baybars] required his throne to be thus strengthened against the jealousies of former comrades, as well as against efforts of the Shiites to restore the Fatimide dynasty. A Caliph of the Orthodox faith would put an end to such intrigue, and confer legitimacy upon the Crown.¹⁵

Lane-Poole viewed the Cairo caliphate in a similar light while acknowledging the ambiguous religious role consigned to the office which he explained as a symbolic focal point:

[...] The second or Egyptian dynasty of Abbasid caliphs were restricted to such spiritual functions as the ritual of the mosque afforded. They formed, however, the technical center of Islam.¹⁶

In an influential 1912 study published in *Mir Islama*, the Russian orientalist and Central Asian historian Wilhelm Barthold analyzed both the offices of the caliphate and the sultanate, highlighting the Abbasids of Cairo as a final attempt to promote the position of the caliph as a spiritual leader for the Muslim world. Although largely dismissive of the Cairo caliphs, Barthold assembled most of the known important sources of information and set the tone for later scholarship. To this day, many of his conclusions on the subject remain unchallenged.¹⁷

In the introduction to his 1923 study of Mamluk Syria, the French Arabist Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes discussed the organization of Mamluk government, devoting ten pages to the position of the Abbasid caliphate and the nature of its residual authority. In relation to

¹² Gustav Weil, *Geschichte des Abbasidenchalifats in Egypten* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1860-62), 1:110-1, 418-20, 532-49, 2:121-9, 411-9, 432-5. The work has since received criticism for reproducing later Mamluk sources with little analysis. See: Irwin, "Under Western Eyes," 30.

¹³ Muir, *Caliphate*, v.

¹⁴ Muir (*Caliphate*, 599-602) outlined the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo in a short chapter entitled "The So-Called Caliphate under the Mamelukes of Egypt." He describes the "hopeless decrepitude" of the institution and dismisses the Abbasids of Cairo as a "race of mock-caliphs." Muir's later history of the Mamluks devoted some space to the Abbasid caliphate as well. See: Muir, *Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt*, esp. 14-7, 83-4, 106-7, 129-30, 205-6.

¹⁵ Muir, *Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt*, 14-5.

¹⁶ Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 265.

¹⁷ Barthold's original study appeared as: "Khalif i Sultan," *Mir Islama* 1 (1912): 203-26, 345-400. Partial translations, notes, and summaries of this study have been made available in other languages. See: C. H. Becker, "Barthold's Studien über Kalif und Sultan," in *Der Islam* 4 (1916): 386-412; Wilhelm Barthold, "Caliph and Sultan," tr. N. S. Doniach in *The Islamic Quarterly* 7, no. 1-2 (1963): 117-35.

Syria, he explored the ramifications of the brief “sultanate” of the caliph al-Musta‘īn in 815/1412. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, while describing the situation as a continuation of *la fiction califale*, depicted the Mamluks as “pseudo-successors” of the Baghdad caliphate, suggesting that the Cairo line of Abbasids were tied to an understanding of the politics of medieval Egypt.¹⁸

In 1925 the British civil servant and scholar Sir Thomas Arnold devoted three thematic chapters in his study of the greater caliphate to the establishment of the Abbasids in Cairo, the foreign Muslim princes who recognized them, and the disposition of the Cairo caliphate after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt.¹⁹ Based heavily on the encyclopedic Shāfi‘ī scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūfī and the earlier work of Weil and Barthold, Arnold sketched his understanding of the caliphate during Mamluk times, and reiterated the conclusion that it was empty ceremony providing religious sanction for the Mamluk sultan.²⁰ Arnold dismissed the diplomas issued by the Abbasid caliphs to foreign rulers and implied that their only purpose was to “appease the tender consciences” of Muslim subjects living beyond Egypt and Syria.²¹ Arnold’s work was not without influence for later studies and presented an image of the Abbasid caliphate confined to the political sphere of history.

The Abbasid Caliphate in Broad Surveys of Mamluk History

In subsequent years studies of the Mamluk Turkish or “Baḥrī” sultans (658-784/1250-1382) devoted sections, and in some cases entire chapters, to the Abbasid caliphate and its implications for the Mamluk regime within larger surveys of era politics. In 1936 the Egyptian historian Muḥammad M. Ziyāda, while tracing the presence of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk political legitimacy, wrote briefly of its religious significance as a manifestation of the regime’s need for spiritual protection (*al-ḥimāya al-rūḥiyya*).²² In the following decade, Ziyāda’s student Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr published separate studies on Baybars and the Qalawunid sultans, and devoted a segment in both works to the political relevance of the Abbasid caliphs.²³ Surūr interpreted the installation of the Abbasid caliphate as Baybars’s wish to extend the breadth of his

¹⁸ Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks d’après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative précédée d’une introduction sur l’organisation gouvernementale* (Paris, 1923), xx-xxix.

¹⁹ Sir Thomas Arnold, *The Caliphate* (London, 1924), 89-106, 139-58.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 102-6.

²² Muḥammad M. Ziyāda, “Ba‘d mulāḥazāt jadīda fī ta’rīkh dawlat al-mamālīk bi-Miṣr,” *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb* (1936): 78-9.

²³ Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr: al-ḥāla al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya fī ‘ahdihā bi-wajhin khāṣṣ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1947), 67-103; *idem*, *Dawlat al-Ẓāhir Baybars* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1960), 45-62.

power by appearing as protector of religion.²⁴ Elsewhere, he discussed the Abbasid role in the military activities of the earliest Qalawunid sultans, while emphasizing the caliphate's receptivity to manipulation down through the reign of the Circassian Mamluk sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (815-24/1412-21).²⁵ Surūr surveyed contemporary Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) on the caliphate and based on Arnold's discussion of the foreign princes that recognized the caliphate, elaborated on diplomatic correspondence between the caliphs and the sultans of Delhi.²⁶ The Egyptian historian Ibrāhīm 'Alī Ṭarkhān similarly devoted a chapter to relations between the Abbasid caliphs and the Circassian Mamluk sultans (784-923/1382-1517) in a 1960 study of the latter.²⁷

Works on the early Mamluk period in the late 1970s and 1980s continued the trend of devoting separate sections to the Abbasid caliphate, including two biographies of Baybars by 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir and Peter Thorau.²⁸ The works covered similar ground such as Baybars's use of the caliphate in foreign relations with the Mongols and his peculiar decision to send the caliph al-Mustanṣir at the head of a paltry expedition to restore Baghdad to Islamic rule. Khuwayṭir, a student of Peter Malcolm Holt, presented the establishment of the caliphate in Cairo as a move to consolidate the prestige of Baybars in Muslim lands against the Mongols.²⁹ In much the same way Thorau read the event as a testament to the political farsightedness of Baybars and a watershed moment in a career of political brilliance.³⁰ The limited scope of such works on Baybars are naturally unable to assess the caliphate as an office for the entire Mamluk period, and confine their commentary on the Abbasid caliphate to matters of political maneuvering and window dressing. Reuven Amitai-Preiss, in the context of what he described as a "cold war" between early Mamluk and Mongol forces, in 1995 outlined the reestablishment of the caliphate and its effect on the diplomacy and military expeditions between the Mamluks and Ilkhanids for twenty years after the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in 659/1260.³¹

A final example of broader Mamluk studies which demonstrates some interest in the caliphate can be found in Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājji's study of the third and final reign of the Qalawunid sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709-41/1309-41),³² in which the author explores the

²⁴ Surūr, *Dawlat al-Zāhir Baybars*, 61.

²⁵ Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn*, 75-96.

²⁶ Ibid., 97-103.

²⁷ Miṣr fī 'aṣr dawlat al-mamālīk al-jarākisa (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1960), 51-71.

²⁸ 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir, *Baibars the First: His Endeavours and Achievements* (London: Green Mountain Press, 1978), 34-6; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 110-9.

²⁹ Khuwayṭir, *Baibars the First*, 34-5.

³⁰ Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 110-9.

³¹ Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Ilkhānid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 56-63.

³² Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājji, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, 709-741/1309-1341* (Kuwait, 1978), 20-36.

difficult relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the caliphate and analyzes the character of the Cairo caliphate during the first half of the fourteenth century.³³ In a similar fashion, al-Ḥajjī also considers the role of the Abbasid caliphate in her biography of the Mamluk sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, in which she characterizes the caliph of the early fifteenth century as a formidable political threat to the interests of the sultan.³⁴

Abbasid Legitimacy and the Inauguration of the Cairo Line

It is safe to suggest that the lion's share of scholarly interest in the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo concerns the reestablishment by Baybars and its immediate relevance to his concerns for political legitimacy. The Abbasid caliphate post-656/1258 did not receive a monograph of its own until 1994 with the appearance of a lengthy investigation by Stefan Heidemann.³⁵ Based on a comprehensive examination of literary sources and numismatic evidence, Heidemann detailed the entire reestablishment process of the caliphate in Aleppo and ultimately in Cairo.³⁶ Like others before him, Heidemann acknowledged that the importance of the caliphate changed over time, based on political conditions and tried to explain why the caliphate sank into disuse.³⁷ In addition to providing a much needed study of the so-called "Aleppan interlude" of the Abbasid caliphate, Heidemann reexamined earlier areas of scholarly interest such as Baybars's investiture ceremonies in Cairo, the caliphal campaign to retake Baghdad in 660/1261, and the changing nature of the caliphate from its use in relations with the Mongols and its subsequent thirty-year period of disuse. In 2008 Anne Broadbridge published further research on the caliphate's importance in legitimating the Mamluk sultans through an examination of the Abbasid caliphate as an integral part of Mamluk ideology and changing perceptions of kingship down to the early fifteenth century Timurid invasions of Mamluk territory.³⁸ The importance of the Abbasid

³³ Ibid., 29-30.

³⁴ Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī, *Anmāt min al-hayāt al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya wa-al-ijtimā'iyya fī salṭanat al-mamālīk fī al-qarnayn al-thāmin wa-al-tāsi' al-hijriyyayn/al-rābi' 'ashar wa-al-khāmis 'ashar al-mīlādiyyayn* (Kuwait: University of Kuwait, 1995), 22-8.

³⁵ Stefan Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994). See also the important review article of the work by Reuven Amitai-Preiss: "The Fall and Rise of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 3 (1996): 487-94.

³⁶ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 91-107, 131-41.

³⁷ Ibid., 194, 202-3.

³⁸ Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 15.

caliphate, above all, to the political program of Baybars and his successors has become the mainstay in recent scholarship and is widely agreed upon in modern studies.³⁹

The Period of Caliphal Interregnum (1258-61)

In 1950, the work of Richard Hartmann opened the question of Mamluk attitudes towards the caliphate from 656-62/1258-61.⁴⁰ Hartmann raised the issue of whether the Mamluks, like the rulers of Mecca, had recognized the Tunisian Hafsid caliphate in the years prior to the Abbasid installation at Cairo, and offered the thesis that the Mamluks, having acknowledged the “caliphate” of al-Mustanşir (also the *laqab* of the Hafsid ruler of Tunis), later named their caliph with the same *laqab* to gloss over the earlier recognition.⁴¹ David Ayalon, who recognized the re-establishment of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo as an “event of major importance in Muslim history,” put the matter to rest ten years later in an article that refuted Hartmann’s thesis and concluded that the Mamluks hastened to legitimate their status through the Abbasid family.⁴²

Thematic Studies

Studies of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo organized by theme provided scholars room to discuss more obscure aspects of the office and begin to move beyond the significance of the reestablishment and initial political value of the family. Following the lead of Arnold’s thematic chapters, in 1942, Annemarie Schimmel studied the Cairene Abbasids in such a fashion.⁴³ In a monograph focused on the uniquely Egyptian conditions of religious offices such as the chief qadiships and the caliphate, Schimmel outlined the powers of the office during the Mamluk period and formed general observations on the caliphs’ material lifestyle, investiture proceedings, succession, and official duties.⁴⁴ Thirty years later Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi produced an important theme-oriented research article on the Cairene Abbasids which made two notable contributions: the beginnings of a discussion on the monetary compensation paid to the caliphs in

³⁹ This view has been adopted by at least two recent studies on the symbiosis of the Mamluk religious and political establishments. See: Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 7-22 and Yaacov Lev, “Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 11.

⁴⁰ Richard Hartmann, “Zur Vorgeschichte des ‘abbāsidschen Schein-Chalifates von Cairo,” in *Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse*, Jahrg. 1947, 7 (1950): 3-10.

⁴¹ Ibid., 6-8. Bernard Lewis accepted Hartmann’s thesis for his *EI²* article. See: “‘Abbāsids,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam²*, (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:21.

⁴² David Ayalon, “Studies on the Transfer of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo,” *Arabica* 7 (1960): 41-59.

⁴³ Annemarie Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Agypten,” *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 1-128; idem, “Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt during the Later Mamluk Period” *Islamic Studies* 4 (1965): 353-5.

⁴⁴ Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 6-25.

cash and kind, as well as a section entitled, “Le chef des hommes de religion,” in which the author observed that although the caliph held greater political significance than religious importance for the Mamluks, his religious authority held deep ramifications for the ‘*ulamā*’ as well as for Mamluk foreign policy.⁴⁵ The studies of Schimmel and Chapoutot-Remadi are important points of departure for examining the subtleties of the Cairo caliphate to be further explored by the present work. More recently, Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ examined the dialectics of spiritual and temporal authority of the caliphate in a focused examination of the Abbasid caliphs during the Mamluk period.⁴⁶ He reviewed salient moments of the dynasty’s political life in Cairo, which he offered as evidence of the caliphate’s ultimate decline. He concluded that the nature of the Mamluk system and its competing amirs ensured the demise of the caliphate’s temporal power and left it with a vague religious role which jurists of the day struggled to define.⁴⁷

Approaching a Dynastic History

In view of the scholarly preoccupation with the reestablishment of the caliphate by Baybars and the absence of a proper dynastic history, the latter years of the institution in Cairo have received short shrift. In 1883-4 the British diplomat and scholar Edward Thomas Rogers compiled a brief dynastic sketch of the Cairo Abbasids based on al-Maqrīzī’s topographical *Khīṭaṭ* (see below) and a slightly later post-Mamluk work by Aḥmad al-Qaramānī (d. 1019/1610) titled *Akḥbār al-duwal wa-athār al-uwal fī al-ta’rīkh*, to better contextualize an archaeological study of inscriptions found at the Abbasid mausoleum in Cairo.⁴⁸

Although Schimmel isolated several important anecdotes of the latter-day Abbasid caliphs of Cairo as evidence to illustrate broader points, it was not until 1967 when Jean-Claude Garcin, while examining the role of the caliphate in the historiography of al-Suyūṭī, presented a slightly more detailed dynastic outline of the Cairo Abbasids.⁴⁹ Using a variety of later Mamluk sources, Garcin explored al-Suyūṭī’s caliphate-centric worldview and described the political value

⁴⁵ Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue: le khalifat abbaside du Caire,” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 20, no. 77-8 (1972): 16-8.

⁴⁶ Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ, *Qaḍāyā min ta’rīkh al-mamālīk al-siyāsī wa-al-ḥaḍārī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M* (Beirut: al-Furāt, 2003), 135-46.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁸ Edward Thomas Rogers (Bey), “Notice sur le lieu de sépulture des Khalifes Abbases, de la deuxième dynastie,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Égyptien* 4 (1883): 108-16; *idem*, “Rapport sur le lieu de sepulture des Khalifes Abbases de la deuxième dynastie, présenté au Comité de conservation des monuments de l’Art arabe par son Secrétaire Rogers Bey,” in *Procès verbaux du comité de conservation* (1884): 21-8.

⁴⁹ Jean-Claude Garcin, “Histoire, opposition politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le *Husn al-Muḥāḍarat* de Suyūṭī,” *Annales islamologiques* 7 (1967): 53-65. See also: Garcin’s brief summary of the Abbasids reigning under Circassian Mamluk rule: *idem*, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 303.

of individual caliphs to the Mamluk sultans. P. M. Holt's equally important 1984 article "Some Observations on the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate of Cairo,'" while not a dynastic history of the caliphs, offers the author's remarks on important events involving the caliphate in chronological order.⁵⁰ Holt, once again, focuses heavily on the reestablishment of the caliphate and its immediate relevance to Mamluk legitimacy and foreign policy, though he also provides important research on the caliphate in Mamluk historiography and manages to trace the descendants of the Cairo line as late as the early nineteenth century.⁵¹ The presentations of latter day Abbasids by Schimmel, Garcin, and Holt, while offering an excellent starting point, have demonstrated the need for a comprehensive dynastic study of the caliphs to help attain a richer understanding of the caliphate in the Mamluk period.

Miscellaneous Studies

Individual aspects of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo have fared somewhat better in attracting scholarly attention, albeit in a roundabout manner. Separate studies of Mamluk costume by Leo Mayer, Mamluk robing procedures by Carl Petry, and headgear worn at the Mamluk court by Albrecht Fuess contain references to the Abbasids and have, when considered together, provided a cursory view of Abbasid dress in Cairo and a glimpse of caliphal ceremonial at the Mamluk court.⁵²

Studies of relevant architecture such as the mosque of Baybars have added more to the picture.⁵³ The mausoleum of the Abbasids in the Qarāfa cemetery has received a fair amount of consideration,⁵⁴ while broader studies of the citadel of Cairo frequently include descriptions of

⁵⁰ P. M. Holt, "Some Observations on the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate of Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 501-7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 507.

⁵² On the dress of the Cairo caliphs see: L. A. Mayer, "Some Remarks on the Dress of the Abbasid Caliphs in Egypt," *Islamic Culture* 17, 1 (1943): 36-8, *idem*, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 12-5; Carl F. Petry, "Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt: Hallowed Traditions, Shifting Protocols," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York, 2001), 360, 363; Albrecht Fuess, "Sultans with Horns: The Political Significance of Headgear in the Mamluk Empire," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 75-6. See also: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 26. While no monograph on Abbasid court ritual in Mamluk Cairo has ever been produced, Paula Saunders's work on the Fatimids serves as a useful reference: *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).

⁵³ Jonathan Bloom, "The Mosque of Baybars al-Bunduqdari in Cairo," *Annales islamologiques* 18 (1982): 46-8.

⁵⁴ See: note 48 above. See also: M. Max Herz (Bey), "Les Sepultures abbassides," *Procès verbaux du comité de conservation* (1910): 131-41; Dorothea Russell, "A Note on the Cemetery of the Abbasid Caliphs of Cairo and the Shrine of Saiyida Nafīsa," *Ars islamica* 6 (1939): 168-74; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 9-10, 126.

the caliphs' quarters and living conditions.⁵⁵ An important study of the nearby shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa by Yūsuf Rāgib outlines the relationship between the shrine and the Abbasid caliphs who, by leave of the Mamluks, oversaw its endowments (despite two brief interruptions) from the mid-fourteenth century until the Ottoman conquest.⁵⁶

The Caliphate in Mamluk Politics

Examining the caliph's place in Mamluk politics became a focus for later research.⁵⁷ By examining the accession procedures and investiture documents scholars have attempted to place the caliphate at the top of a theoretical hierarchy of the Mamluk sultanate, in which the Abbasid caliph delegated plenary powers to the Mamluk sultan thereby designating religious authority to the entire Mamluk system and its three branches of government administration: military, bureaucratic, and religious.⁵⁸ As an integral part of their studies of the Mamluk sultan's power and authority, 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid and P. M. Holt engaged in important discussions of the role of the Abbasid caliph as a source of sultanic authority as well as the caliphate's existence as an annex of the sultanate.⁵⁹

Holt believed that after Baybars, the caliph's presence at investiture ceremonies became "technically indispensable,"⁶⁰ while also noting important changes to the delegation of authority, that at the time of Baybars the caliph had *received* the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) from the sultan and his commanders but shortly thereafter, the tables had turned with the caliph, now merely

⁵⁵ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial," *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 32, 51-3; Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 97-8, 124.

⁵⁶ "Al-Sayyida Nafisa, Sa légende, son culte et son cimetière," *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 41-3.

⁵⁷ See for example: P. M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 2 (1975): 242-4, 246; idem, "The Structure of Government in the Mamluk Sultanate," in *Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P.M. Holt (Westminster: Aris and Philips, 1977), 44-6; Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 3 (1994): 373-92; Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 161-73 and William Brinner, "The Struggle for Power in the Mamluk State: Some Reflections on the Transition from Bahri to Burji Rule," *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 4-10 January 1964* (New Delhi, 1970), 231-4. See also Schimmel's brief discussion in "Kalif und Kadi," 21-2; Winslow Williams Clifford, *State Formation and the Structure of Politics in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 648-741 A.H./1250-1341 C.E.* ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2013), 54-64.

⁵⁸ For a useful illustration of the hierarchy with the Abbasid caliph at its summit, see: "The Mamluk Chain of Command," in *The Atlas of the Crusades*, ed. Jonathan Riley-Smith (London: Time Books, 1991), 110-1.

⁵⁹ See: 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk wa-rusūmuḥum fī Miṣr: dirāsa shāmila lil-nuẓum al-siyāsiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjilū al-Miṣriyya, 1979), 1:29, 32-41; Holt, "Position and Power," 243-5.

⁶⁰ Holt, "Position and Power," 243-4.

another pensioner at court, gave *bay'a* to the sultan alongside the four chief judges.⁶¹ In light of Émile Tyan's writings on the caliphate and the theory of delegation of power, Linda Northrup observed that in the early Bahārī period, the caliph's delegation of authority (as demonstrated in the sultan's diploma of investiture) to the Mamluk sultan strengthened the tendency toward centralization and militarization and facilitated the merger of a joint political and military structure with Islamic coloring.⁶² By virtue of the caliph's designation of authority to the sultan to act as his deputy, the Mamluk sultanate was allowed to perceive itself as engaging in a form of Islamic rule. A 1999 study by Lutz Wiederhold also demonstrated the possibilities for further research on the caliphate in Mamluk politics and society through the exploration of at least two revolts in late fourteenth century Egypt and Syria involving the Abbasid caliphate.⁶³

Although scholars have made headway in understanding the role of the caliphate in Mamluk politics, much work remains to be done on the interrelationship between the caliphate, the religious establishment, and society at large. Schimmel and Garcin attempted to shed light on the issue by examining scholarly families and Sufis in Egypt with ties to official offices and partial or complete access to the Abbasid caliphs.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the religious and social significance of the Abbasid caliphate has fared poorly in general surveys of religion under the Mamluks. In the article "Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt during the Later Mamluk Period," Schimmel presents a bleak picture of the caliphs as humiliated nobodies denied the traditional legal rights and prerogatives of their historical office.⁶⁵ An even harsher evaluation comes from Professor Donald P. Little who described the caliphs as "creatures of the sultans," the latter of whom lacked any respect for the caliphate and through it "exploited religion for political gain."⁶⁶ While these observations are not necessarily wide of the mark, surveys of the caliphate in the context of Mamluk religion tend to focus more on what the caliphate *was not* rather than what it actually was.

⁶¹ Holt, "Structure of Government," 45; idem, "Some Observations," 504. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of this development.

⁶² Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 167.

⁶³ Lutz Wiederhold, "Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a 'Zahiri Revolt' in Damascus in 1386," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 203–35.

⁶⁴ Schimmel focuses on the Ibn al-Shihna family ("Kalif und Kadi," 93-122) while Garcin examines the Ibn Jamā'a and Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd families ("Histoire," 65-75). See also: Jean-Claude Garcin, *Un centre musulman de la Haute-Egypte médiévale: Qus* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1976), 294.

⁶⁵ Schimmel, "Some Glimpses," 353-5.

⁶⁶ Donald P. Little, "Religion under the Mamluks," *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 173-4.

Acknowledgment and subsequent discussion of the caliphate's spiritual and religious authority in Mamluk society by Chapoutot-Remadi, Hūṭayṭ, and others have proved essential to the issues I aim to explore in the present dissertation.

* * *

Modern scholarship is uniform in its assertion that the most salient dynamic of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo was its potential for legitimating the Mamluk sultans. This myopia has frustrated attempts at subsequent discussion of the institution. After an extensive review of the available literature, it seems there is still more to the picture. There are other dimensions to the Cairo caliphate as yet unexplored, including its relationship to the scholarly class, its contribution, if any, to the evolution of the Sunni theory of the caliphate, and its overall significance to the Later Middle Period of Islamic history.

The current study understands itself as a contribution to Islamic social and political history by way of a thorough examination of its most outstanding leadership institution, the caliphate, as traced and presented through the lens of Mamluk-era narrative sources, as well as juristic and bureaucratic literature. I hope to help adjust the pre-existing judgment that the office itself occupied little role outside the citadel and was strictly harbored for political expediency. It is not my intent to overemphasize the role of a largely powerless political institution, though the Abbasids of Cairo are much in need of re-consideration in light of additional research that spans the 250 years of the institution alongside the Mamluk sultanate. My work is a final chapter in the saga of the "kept caliphate," which began with the chief Turkish amirs of late ninth century Baghdad and Sāmarrā, then continued with the Buyid and Seljuq dynasties of the tenth through the twelfth centuries and finally by the Mamluk sultans that ruled Egypt and Syria.

The corpus of existing research has left many unanswered questions regarding indigenous, contemporary perceptions of the Abbasid caliphate, particularly in the years after the Cairo investiture of the second caliph al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh in 661/1262. Therefore, I propose a comprehensive investigation of the dynasty with equal interest paid to the socio-religious importance of the caliphs themselves. The first chapter examines modern scholarship along with original source materials relevant to the study. The second chapter is a detailed narrative dynastic history of the Cairo Abbasids focusing on the story of the individual caliphs in light of their political and social relevance in Mamluk society. Chapter three is a survey of political literature dealing with the theory of the caliphate or imamate among jurists and authors of advice literature, while the fourth chapter considers the subject at hand in the view of Mamluk chroniclers, biographers, and authors of historical works. Chapter five analyzes functional aspects and formal expectations for the Cairo caliphate based on existing investiture and succession documents with

the hope of shedding new light on the caliphal institution in the context of Mamluk politics and religion. The final chapter initiates a discussion on how we may begin to see the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo anew in light of its social dimensions.

Earlier, and arguably more cynical conclusions, have acquired great authority, causing many to suppose that the Cairo caliphate deserves no second look. A more thorough treatment of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo has been long overdue, one which allows a more rounded image of the caliphate in Mamluk times, such as it was. This study hopes to provide a framework for the Abbasids of Cairo that future scholars can use to examine the changing nature of the caliphal office and to develop a deeper understanding of the caliphate's significance in the history and theory of the medieval Middle East.

PRIMARY SOURCES FOR THE ABBASID CALIPHATE OF CAIRO

A. Mamluk Narrative, Biographical, and Travel Literature

Students of Mamluk history are the fortunate heirs to a wealth of available source material with profound significance for the social, religious, and political life of the period. Much of the narrative for a study of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo comes from the Arabic historical sources of the Turkish “Baḥrī” period (648-784/1250-1382) which shed light on the beginnings of the institution. Likewise, the later sources from the Circassian “Burjī” period (784-923/1382-1517), despite heavy reliance on earlier accounts, sometimes provide a more holistic and nuanced image of the Cairo caliphate.⁶⁷

Primary sources for the study of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo are varied and consist of several important genres: narrative historical annals and chronicles, biographical literature, chancery encyclopedias containing documents, investiture deeds, letters, and sermons, as well as literature and observations recorded by contemporary travelers. Juristic treatises, advice literature, chancery manuals, and documentary sources composed by various members of the religious and bureaucratic establishment provide an idealized and jurisprudential understanding of the caliphate which does not always reflect actual practices.

Such sources are not without problems considering that the format or scope of a particular work limits its information. Chronicles often provide uneven coverage of political movements involving the caliphs, while biographical dictionaries favor physical descriptions, perceived virtues, and scholarly achievements. Documents are often not intended to be used as

⁶⁷ We may consider works composed 200 years after the events they describe as “primary sources” if their text reproduces or preserves original accounts.

historical sources at the time of their creation and thus sometimes inadvertently provide insight. Consideration for an author's audience or his own perception of the relevance of the Abbasid caliphate to the Mamluk political scene also informed presentation. Although the sources occasionally betray glimpses of the popular view towards individual caliphs, the bulk of our knowledge of Mamluk-era views is confined to a sampling of opinions from the scholarly and bureaucratic classes, supplemented by members of the Mamluk elite who engaged in historiography. We are at a loss for any sources that reflect the viewpoints of the caliphs themselves or the Cairene Sunni Muslim masses they were meant to appeal to and resonate with.

Narrative Literature

While the earliest chronicles, written by former Ayyubid administrators who retained position under the Mamluks, tended to find affinity with the former ruling dynasty, later Mamluk chronicles in turn, tended to be favorable towards the sultans, were often organized annalistically and engaged in mutual borrowing.⁶⁸ The earliest authors of Arabic historical works from the Mamluk period witnessed the transition from Ayyubid to Mamluk rule and were also contemporary with the dramatic sack of Baghdad and murder of the last Abbasid caliph in 656/1258. In his *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-al-sābi‘ al-ma‘rūf bi-al-dhayl ‘alā al-rawḍatayn*,⁶⁹ the Damascene scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267) provided a contemporary account of the first two caliphal investitures, and from his post in Syria described an important mass celebration of the first Abbasid investiture in Cairo. The Syrian magistrate Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298) served in the administration of Baybars and wrote a detailed history of the Ayyubids and early Mamluks, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*,⁷⁰ which ended in the year 659/1261 and covered the investiture of the first Cairo Abbasids in detail.

Historians dating to the epoch of Saladin helped establish a trend of royal biography for powerful Muslim rulers, perhaps, to laud their merits as much as cater to their insecurities.⁷¹ The chief bureaucrat and chancery head (*kātib al-sirr*) Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1292) wrote three such royal histories of the Mamluk sultans he served; *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sirat al-*

⁶⁸ For an overview see: Donald P. Little, "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 412-44.

⁶⁹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā‘īl Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-al-sābi‘*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid ibn al-Husayn al-Kawtharī (Beirut, 1974).

⁷⁰ Muḥammad ibn Sālim ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, vol. 6, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut, 2004).

⁷¹ P. M. Holt, "Three Biographies of al-Zahir Baybars," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. David Morgan, (London: SOAS, 1982), 27.

*Malik al-Zāhir*⁷² about al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 657-76/1260-77), *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa-al-‘uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*⁷³ for the reign of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 678-89/1279-90), and the unfinished *al-Altāf al-khaṭīyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sulṭāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*⁷⁴ concerning al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 689-93/1290-3). Each biography is markedly different and offers unique, albeit often calculated information about its subject, designed to emphasize his virtue. Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s access to the early sultans made him an essential source for later chroniclers who borrowed freely from his histories. As head of the Mamluk chancery, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir was able to enrich his historical narrative with valuable documents that he himself had drafted.⁷⁵ He was an active participant and eye-witness to Baybars’s investiture ceremonies for the first two Abbasid caliphs. While not a direct participant in the first ceremony, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir remains an important eyewitness of al-Mustanṣir’s arrival in Cairo, providing details of the two investiture ceremonies held at the behest of Baybars and information on the caliph’s pseudo-quest to liberate Baghdad. Although Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s nephew, Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-Miṣrī (d. 730/1330), did not enjoy quite the same access to the sultans, he continued the family tradition of chancery service and also wrote royal histories of Baybars (*Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaz‘a min al-sīra al-Zāhiriyya*⁷⁶) and Qalāwūn (*al-Faḍl al-ma‘thūr min sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr*⁷⁷) which contain his personal observations and addenda to his uncle’s works.⁷⁸ As a result, both Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir and Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī best serve one’s understanding when examined together to compare and contrast data.⁷⁹ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī penned his biography of Baybars during his tenure as scribe for Qalāwūn and thus adopted a more critical tone towards

⁷² Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976).

⁷³ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa-al-‘uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo, 1961).

⁷⁴ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Altāf al-khaṭīyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sulṭāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg, as *Ur Abd Allah b. Abd ez-Zāhir’s Biografi över Sultanen el-Melik al-Ašraf Ḥalīl. Arabisk Tāxt med Översättning, Inledning Ock Anmärkningar Utgiven*, (Lund, 1902).

⁷⁵ On the life and career of Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, see: Yūsuf ibn Taghrībīrdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi ba‘da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa‘īd ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1984-93), 7:98-100. See also: Ḥusayn ‘Āṣī, *Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir: ‘aṣruhu, wa-turāthuhu al-ta’rīkhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1993).

⁷⁶ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaz‘a min al-sīra al-Zāhiriyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976). See also: Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: Brill, 1943), 2:28 (and Supplement, 1937, hereafter cited as *GAL*).

⁷⁷ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *al-Faḍl al-ma‘thūr min sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1998).

⁷⁸ P. M. Holt, “A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt,” *English Historical Review* 101, no. 400 (1986): 672-9.

⁷⁹ Holt, “Three Biographies,” 26-7; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 33.

Baybars, perhaps in order to underscore Qalāwūn's legitimacy and importance.⁸⁰ It is in this light that he presents Baybars's pretensions towards the Abbasid caliphate. Another chancery clerk, Muḥammad bin 'Alī ibn Shaddād (d. 684/1285) wrote a royal history of Baybars also titled *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir*. While the earlier section of the work that covered the Abbasid investitures is lost to us, Ibn Shaddād wrote a useful topography of Iraq and Syria, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā' al-shām wa-al-jazīra*⁸¹, which provides details concerning the caliph al-Mustansir's campaign to retake Iraq in 659-60/1261.

In addition to chancery employees, the early period of Mamluk historiography includes the works of Mamluk officers such as the former slave of Qalāwūn, Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325). While his writing best serves military history, thanks to his unique sources and firsthand insights, Baybars al-Manṣūrī presented information on the Abbasid caliphate as it pertained to his interest in political matters affecting the state. Both his universal chronicle *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*⁸² and his shorter work, *al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-Turkiyya*,⁸³ provide unique details on the investitures of the first three Abbasid caliphs and their participation in military action.⁸⁴ Another example of a veteran-penned universal chronicle is the *Mukhtaṣar fī ta'rīkh al-bashar*,⁸⁵ attributed to the Ayyubid scion and so-called "sultan of Ḥamā" al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad Ismā'īl Abū al-Fidā' (d. 732/1331).⁸⁶ In addition to his important perspective as a Syrian and Ayyubid prince, Abū al-Fidā' maintains a mildly skeptical attitude towards the contemporaneous Abbasid house.⁸⁷

A group of religious scholars from early fourteenth century Syria significantly expanded the source base for Mamluk history. Authors such as Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325-6),⁸⁸ 'Alām al-Dīn al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339),⁸⁹ Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338), and the younger

⁸⁰ See: P.M. Holt, "Some Observations on Shāfi' ibn 'Alī's Biography of Baybars," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 123-30; idem, "Chancery Clerk," 672; Little, "Historiography," 422; Robert Irwin, "Mamluk History and Historians," in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, ed. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 163.

⁸¹ Muḥammad ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā' al-shām wa-al-jazīra* (Damascus, 1953).

⁸² Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998).

⁸³ Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *al-Tuḥfa al-mulkiyya fī al-dawla al-turkiyya*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Hamdān (Cairo, 1987).

⁸⁴ *GAL*, 2:44, no. 1, 2, Suppl. 2:43. See also: Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970), 4-10.

⁸⁵ Ismā'īl ibn 'Alī Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynhum 'Azab (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1999).

⁸⁶ *GAL* 2:45, no. 1, Suppl. 2:44, no. 1. See also: Little, *Introduction*, 42-6.

⁸⁷ I expand upon these observations below in Chapter 4.

⁸⁸ Little, *Introduction*, 57-61.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-53.

Muḥammad ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363)⁹⁰ preserved much of each others' work via mutual copying and sharing. Although the entirety of al-Jazarī's important *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'uhu wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a'yān min abnā'ihī* has not survived, it was heavily copied and preserved in the works of al-Yūnīnī, al-Kutubī, and others.⁹¹ This so-called "Syrian circle," particularly al-Yūnīnī, make use of a certain Zayn ad-Dīn Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Bannā', a companion of the Abbasid caliph al-Ḥākim who provides exclusive information on that caliph's movements before coming to Cairo. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) was another Syrian religious scholar who engaged in writing a number of historical works including *al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, *Kitāb duwal al-Islām*, as well as his universal history *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām* which covered Islam by decade from 1-700/622-1301 (and also included copious biographies), and his biographical collection *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā*, which preserves unique anecdotes about the first Abbasid investiture ceremony in Cairo.⁹² The Syrian qadi and litterateur Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349) wrote a history (*Ta'rīkh*) entitled, "*Tatimmat al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*,"⁹³ heavily dependent on the work of Abū al-Fidā', which addresses the caliphs of Cairo down to the reign of al-Ḥākim II in the year of the author's death.⁹⁴

The history of Qalāwūn and his sons, entitled *Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-banīh*,⁹⁵ was attributed to the Syrian scholar and chancery scribe Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377)⁹⁶ and his son Zayn al-Dīn Ṭāhir (d. 808/1406). It covers Mamluk politics during much of the Qalawunid period, including reports on the reigning caliphs.⁹⁷ A slightly later Syrian scholar, 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr (d. 775/1373-4), wrote an

⁹⁰ Ibid., 67-9.

⁹¹ Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Ta'rīkh ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a'yān min abnā'ihī*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1998). See also: *GAL* Suppl. 2:45; Little, *Introduction*, 53-7; Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 92-116.

⁹² Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *al-'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Kuwait, 1960-6); idem, *Kitāb duwal al-Islām* (Hyderabad, 1944-6); idem, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1990-2000, 2004); idem, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981). See also: *GAL*, 2:47, Suppl. 2:45-6; Little, *Introduction*, 61-6.

⁹³ 'Umar ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf, 1969).

⁹⁴ Little, *Introduction*, 66-7.

⁹⁵ Badr al-Dīn ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, *Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-banīh*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1976-86).

⁹⁶ See: *GAL* Suppl. 2:35.

⁹⁷ The exact authorship of the work, whether father or son, remains unclear. See: Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 22; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 50; William M. Brinner, "Ibn Ḥabīb, Badr al-Dīn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3:775.

important chronicle called *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta'rīkh*⁹⁸ as a continuation of Abū Shāma, based on earlier Syrian authors al-Birzālī, al-Jazarī, and al-Yūnīnī, and supplemented with unique reports on the caliphs from his own informants and personal experiences.⁹⁹ In his chronicle, Ibn Kathīr, a notable religious scholar of the Shāfi'ī rite who also wrote an important *tafsīr* work, recounts his own meeting with the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'taḍid in 753/1352.

Two later products of the Damascene intellectual scene were Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥijjī al-Ḥisbānī (d. 816/1413) and his student Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448), who was born into a prominent Damascene family of Shāfi'ī scholars and served as a qadi in the city himself.¹⁰⁰ Ibn Ḥijjī's *Ta'rīkh* provides some unique data covering the years 741-7/1340-7 and 769-815/1367-1430.¹⁰¹ The *Ta'rīkh* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, despite the author's status as an outsider to Cairo affairs, likewise includes important details on the Abbasid caliphate which appear to be exclusive.¹⁰²

Several other significant sources dating from the third reign of the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (709-41/1310-41) provide intricate details of that sultan's relationship with the Abbasid caliph of his time, al-Mustakfī billāh (701-40/1302-40). These include the historical annals of the *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, a chancery encyclopedia compiled by the Egyptian clerk Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333), which presents the Mamluk period at the end of a larger world history. Al-Nuwayrī treats the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo in two separate chapters of the fifth and final section of the work devoted to times past. Al-Nuwayrī's chronicle on the Mamluks treats the caliphs like most Mamluk chroniclers, mentioning the Abbasids only at times of investiture or in connection to other noteworthy events that required their participation. Even so, the *Nihāya* devotes a short section to the first three Cairo caliphs after a lengthier discussion of the Abbasids of Baghdad.¹⁰³

As the son of a Mamluk official, Abū Bakr ibn Aybak al-Dawādārī (d. 736/1335-6) provided important, detailed information from his father's circle in his *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar*,¹⁰⁴ including many popular tales and folk references in colloquial Arabic vernacular. The one time *ḥalqa* commander Mūsā al-Yūsufī (d. 759/1358) was a frank critic of al-Nāṣir

⁹⁸ Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta'rīkh* (Beirut, 1966). See also: *GAL*, 2:49, no. 1, Suppl. 2:48; Little, *Introduction*, 69-73, 112.

⁹⁹ Little, *Introduction*, 70-3.

¹⁰⁰ See: *GAL* Suppl. 2:50. See: Massoud, *Chronicles*, 81.

¹⁰¹ Aḥmad ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta'rīkh Ibn Ḥijjī: ḥawādīth wa-wafayāt 796-815 H.*, ed. Abū Yahyā 'Abd Allāh al-Kundarī (Beirut, 2003).

¹⁰² Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. Adnan Darwish (Damascus, 1977-94).

¹⁰³ Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Sa'īd 'Ashūr (Cairo: 1985-92), 23:327-33.

¹⁰⁴ Abū Bakr ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar* (Cairo, 1960-92). See: *GAL*, Suppl. 2:44; Little, *Introduction*, 10-8.

Muḥammad in his early years. In his *Nuzhat al-nāẓir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,¹⁰⁵ al-Yūsufī provides some details on the souring of relations between the sultan and the caliph and was cited extensively by later writers such as al-‘Aynī and al-Maqrīzī (see below).¹⁰⁶ The historian Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Shujā‘ī (d. after 756/1355-6), likewise profited from the information in al-Yūsufī’s *Nuzhat al-nāẓir* and preserves many details of a difficult period for the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo after the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in his *Ta’rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādihi* which has only survived for the years 737-45/1337-45.¹⁰⁷

Of lesser importance is the *Nahj al-sadīd wa-al-durr al-farīd fī-mā ba‘da ta’rīkh Ibn al-‘Amīd*,¹⁰⁸ completed in 759/1358 by the Coptic chronicler Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il (d. after 761/1360), who despite his atypical background, provided little in the way of original observation, drawing instead from the works of Muslim historians such as Baybars al-Manṣūrī, al-Nuwayrī, and al-Yūsufī, and even reproduced Islamic expressions of faith and religious formulas in his text.¹⁰⁹ The brief Mamluk chronicle *Ta’rīkh salāḥīn al-mamālīk*,¹¹⁰ was edited by the Swedish orientalist Karl Vilhelm Zetterstéen as *Beiträge zur Geschichte der mamlukensultane* in the early twentieth century and likewise offers little new information about the Abbasid caliphs between 691-740/1291-1340.¹¹¹ Zetterstéen’s chronicle is also known to Mamlukists and referenced in this work as “Author Z.”¹¹² Appended to the work is a short history penned by the Mamluk amir Baktāsh al-Fākhirī (d. 744/1344). An extended version of that chronicle, which adds little new information about the caliphs, was edited and published in 2010 by ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī as *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhirī*.¹¹³

Subsequently, Arabic historiography experienced a sudden florescence in the Egypt of the Circassian Burjī Mamluks. However, comparatively few chronicles appeared in Syria and the

¹⁰⁵ Mūsā al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Aḥmad Huṭayṭ (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ Donald Little, “The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahārī Mamluk History: al-Yūsufī’s *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974): 42–54. See also: Little, *Introduction*, 80-3.

¹⁰⁷ Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādihi*, ed. Barbara Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1977). See also: *GAL*, 2:28; Little, “Historiography,” 427.

¹⁰⁸ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb al-nahj al-sadīd wa-al-durr al-farīd fī-mā ba‘da ta’rīkh Ibn al-‘Amīd or Histoire des sultans mamlouks*, ed. and tr. Edgard Blochet (Paris, 1911, 1920, 1932).

¹⁰⁹ Little, *Introduction*, 32-8; idem, “Historiography,” 427; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 49. It is worth noting that the Syriac version of the *Nahj al-sadīd* provides additional information and details not preserved by the Arabic chronicle.

¹¹⁰ Author Z, *Ta’rīkh salāḥīn al-mamālīk* or *Beiträge zur Geschichte der mamlukensultane*, ed. K. V. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919).

¹¹¹ The chronicle itself covers the years 690-709/1291-1310. See: Little, *Introduction*, 18-24.

¹¹² Little, *Introduction*, 18-24.

¹¹³ Baktāsh al-Fākhirī, *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhirī*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2010).

historical writing of this period is characterized by a consistent focus on events in Egypt. While this shift in perspective did not affect a caliphate based in Cairo, we are at a loss for correlating interpretations of the caliphate in other parts of the Mamluk sultanate at that time. The ḥadīth scholar and courtier Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt (d. 807/1405) wrote *Ta'riḫ al-duwal wa-al-mulūk*, a universal history in which the Mamluk period was a mere section, but it preserved fragmentary passages from earlier lost works, thus providing an important source for later historians.¹¹⁴ Moreover, Ibn al-Furāt's own observations for the years 791-3/1389-91 provide useful information about the delicate relationship between the sultan Barqūq and the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil during crises.

Ṣārim al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1407) came from the *awlād al-nās*, or the non-military class of men born into Mamluk households and was familiar with the military environment of the Mamluks. His important historical works include the history of Egypt *Nuzhat al-anām fī ta'riḫ al-Islām*¹¹⁵ from which later historians such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī copied.¹¹⁶ Ibn Duqmāq also wrote a history of the caliphs and sultans who ruled Egypt beginning with the Ayyubids down to the early Circassian period in 805/1402-3, entitled *al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī siyar al-khulafā' wa-al-mulūk wa-al-salāṭīn*,¹¹⁷ which includes brief biographies of the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo appended to a history of the Baghdad caliphs.¹¹⁸

The revered North African scholar, historian, and Mālikī qadī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn wrote several works pertinent to the present study, including his observations of historical patterns, Islamic society, and authority in his *Muqaddima*,¹¹⁹ the exordium to his historical work, as well as his discussion of the Abbasids of Cairo in his work of history, *Kitāb al-ʿibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada' wa-al-khabar fī ayyām al-ʿArab wa-al-Barbar*.¹²⁰ The Egyptian historian and qadī Walī al-Dīn Abū Zurʿa ibn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 826/1422) was born into a prominent scholarly family and along with his father wrote several continuations (*dhayls*) to the works of al-Dhahabī, including *al-Dhayl ʿalā al-ʿibar fī khabar man ʿabar*¹²¹ which surveyed Mamluk

¹¹⁴ Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫ ibn al-Furāt* (Beirut, 1936). See also: *GAL*, 2:50, Suppl. 2:49; Little, *Introduction*, 73-5.

¹¹⁵ Ibrāhīm ibn Duqmāq, *Nuzhat al-anām fī ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 628 H/1230 M-659 H/1261 M., ed. Samīr Ṭabbāra (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1999).

¹¹⁶ Massoud, *Chronicles*, 28-9.

¹¹⁷ Ibrāhīm Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī siyar al-khulafā' wa-al-mulūk wa-al-salāṭīn* (Mecca, 1982).

¹¹⁸ *GAL*, 2:50, no. 1, Suppl. 2:50, no. 2.

¹¹⁹ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dar al-Arqam, 2001).

¹²⁰ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'riḫ al-ʿallāma Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1961). See also: Little, *Introduction*, 75-6.

¹²¹ Walī al-Dīn ibn al-ʿIrāqī, *al-Dhayl ʿalā al-ʿibar fī khabar man ʿabar*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Maḥdī ʿAbbās (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1989).

politics from 762-85/1360-83 though without including much new information on the Abbasid caliphs who reigned in that period.¹²²

Another magistrate interested in the caliphate was the highly influential Shāfi‘ī supreme judge and renowned scholar of the Burjī period, Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) who enjoyed Abbasid patronage and composed poetry in their honor.¹²³ While his reputation rests largely on religious scholarship, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī authored historical works including his annalistic chronicle *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*¹²⁴ (covering 773-850/1372-1446) and a biographical dictionary (discussed below).

Perhaps the most iconic Mamluk chronicler, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), provided unique material on the Mamluks and the Abbasid caliphate in his chronicle *al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*,¹²⁵ and on at least two separate occasions completed valuable dynastic sketches of the Cairo Abbasids down to his own time.¹²⁶ In every sense a lover of Cairo, al-Maqrīzī completed an important topographical survey of the city and its environs, *al-Mawā’iz wa-al-i’tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār fī Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*¹²⁷ and described structures of relevance to the caliphs such as the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa, the Abbasid mausoleum in the Qarāfa cemetery, and other lands and properties gifted to the caliphs. Al-Maqrīzī faced a formidable professional rival in the Egypt-based scholar, administrator, and market inspector (*muḥtasib*) Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451), whose chronicle *‘Iqd al-jumān fī ta’rīkh ahl al-zamān*¹²⁸ provided a great deal of original material and unique details on the Abbasid caliphs in the Bahrī period.¹²⁹ Al-‘Aynī’s position in the Mamluk government and fluency in Turkish granted him access to later sultans such as al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh (815-24/1412-21), al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar

¹²² Massoud, *Chronicles*, 45.

¹²³ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of his caliphal poetry.

¹²⁴ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969-98).

¹²⁵ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa’īd ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1956-73). See also: *GAL*, 2:39, Suppl. 2:36-7, no. 3; Little, *Introduction*, 76-80, 110-1. The initial popularity of al-Maqrīzī may be due, as Little suggested, to the *Sulūk* being among the earliest Mamluk sources to be read by western scholars. However, recent scholarship has cast doubt on the originality of al-Maqrīzī’s work. See: Frédéric Bauden, “Maqriziana IX: Should al-Maqrīzī Be Thrown Out with the Bath Water? The Question of His Plagiarism of al-Awḥadī’s *Khiṭaṭ* and the Documentary Evidence,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 159-232.

¹²⁶ Al-Maqrīzī appears to have pondered ideas of Abbasid legitimacy during his later years. After retiring to Mecca he devoted several treatises to the subject. I address his attitude towards the Abbasid caliphate at length in Chapter 4.

¹²⁷ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā’iz wa-al-i’tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid (London, 2002). See also: *GAL*, 2:39, Suppl. 2:36, no. 1.

¹²⁸ Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-jumān fī ta’rīkh ahl al-zamān: ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987). See also: *GAL*, 2:53, no.1, Suppl. 2:51, no.1; Little, *Introduction*, 80-7.

¹²⁹ On the professional enmity between al-Maqrīzī and al-‘Aynī, see: Anne F. Broadbridge, “Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-‘Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 89-97.

(824/1421), and al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825-41/1422-38), for whom he wrote royal biographies while occasionally also commenting on the position of the caliphate.¹³⁰

A student of both al-Maqrīzī and al-‘Aynī, the last great Egyptian historian of the fifteenth century, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), was a *walad al-nās*, the Turkish son of a Mamluk amir who acquired the scholarly, military, and bureaucratic credentials that gained him acceptance in all circles. Ibn Taghrībirdī succeeded al-‘Aynī as court historian and similarly enjoyed access to several Mamluk sultans and Abbasid caliphs. His local dynastic history of Egypt, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*,¹³¹ chronologically covers the reigns of several dynasties and is organized by individual rulers.¹³² It is of particular use for the Abbasid caliphs of the first half of the fifteenth century. Filling the void as Egypt’s most prominent historian left by his teachers, Ibn Taghrībirdī wrote *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*¹³³ as a continuation of al-Maqrīzī’s *Sulūk* from 845-74/1441-69, and in it, the author provides minor details about the caliphs which escaped coverage in the *Nujūm*.¹³⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī also composed *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*,¹³⁵ a history of caliphs and sultans, which, for the caliphs of Cairo, compiled all that the historian knew about each Abbasid down to his own time.

The ḥadīth scholar Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqā‘ī (d. 885/1480) also wrote a chronicle entitled *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*,¹³⁶ covering 855-70/1451-66. Conceived as a *dhayl* to Ibn Ḥajar’s *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, al-Biqā‘ī’s *Izhār* provides insights into the reigns of the sultans Jaqmaq and Khushqadam and is concerned with political developments during the life of the author. For the purposes of the current study, al-Biqā‘ī provides useful coverage of the 857/1453 revolt against al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān ibn Jaqmaq followed two years later by a failed uprising against al-Ashraf Īnāl, both of which involved the participation of the reigning Abbasid caliph al-Qā’im bi-amr Allāh (855-9/1451-5).¹³⁷

¹³⁰ Little, *Introduction*, 80-3, 136; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 39.

¹³¹ Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963–72).

¹³² *GAL*, 2:42, Suppl. 2:39, no. 1. See also: Little, *Introduction*, 87-92, 111.

¹³³ Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper as “Extracts from Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s Chronicle Entitled Ḥawādith ad-duhūr fī madā ‘l-ayyām wash-shuhūr,” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930-42). See: *GAL* Suppl. 2:40, no. 6.

¹³⁴ William Popper, “Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Djamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrībirdī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:138.

¹³⁵ Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo, 1997). *GAL*, 2:42, no. 2.

¹³⁶ Ibrāhīm al-Biqā‘ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd al-‘Awfī (Giza, 1992-3).

¹³⁷ For recent scholarship on the life and works of al-Biqā‘ī, see: Li Guo, “Al-Biqā‘ī’s Chronicle: A Fifteenth Century Learned Man’s Reflection on his Time and World,” in *The Historiography of Islamic*

The one-time deputy qadi and son of a Cairo money-changer ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī (d. 900/1494-5) earned income as a manuscript copier who tried his hand at historical writing perhaps on the advice of his mentor Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.¹³⁸ It is his historical work *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*¹³⁹ which concerns us here for its coverage of 786-879/1384-1475. Al-Ṣayrafī’s individual reports on the contemporary Abbasid caliphate corroborate those of other sources without adding much unique information.¹⁴⁰ The author’s brief continuation of the *Nuzha*, the *Inbā’ al-haṣr bi-abnā’ al-‘aṣr*,¹⁴¹ covers the years 873-86/1469-82, and includes several minor details of the reigning Abbasid caliphs of the late fifteenth century.

The ḥadīth scholar Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) wrote two annalistic histories intended as *dhayls* to al-Dhahabī and al-Maqrīzī’s works respectively: *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*¹⁴² which treats 745-898/1345-1493 and includes a good deal of salient historical reports and biographies for contemporary Abbasid family members, as well as the shorter *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*¹⁴³ which covers 845-51/1441-7 and contains minor details on the reigning caliph al-Mustakfī II (r. 845-55/1441-51). Another of al-Sakhāwī’s continuations to al-Dhahabī’s work, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ‘alā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*,¹⁴⁴ covers much the same ground as *Wajīz al-kalām*, though the *Dhayl* goes down to the year 901/1495-6. In his historical annals, al-Sakhāwī sometimes attempts to have the last word on controversies including those that involved the Abbasid caliphs of his time.

Though not the author of a universal history, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abū Bakr al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) wrote a local history of Egypt (*Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī akhbār Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*¹⁴⁵) and a caliphal history (*Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*¹⁴⁶) both of which closely followed the careers of the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo and their interaction with the Mamluk sultans,

Egypt, c. 950-1800, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 121-48; idem, “Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqā’ī’s Autobiographical Chronicle,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 101-21; Walid A. Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and An Introduction to al-Biqā’ī’s Bible Treatise* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 7-20.

¹³⁸ For biographical details, see: Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi’* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1935), 5:217-9.

¹³⁹ ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970). See: *GAL*, Suppl. 2:41.

¹⁴⁰ Massoud, *Chronicles*, 135; Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyibāy and Qanṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 7.

¹⁴¹ Khaṭīb al-Jawharī [al-Ṣayrafī], *Inbā’ al-haṣr bi-abnā’ al-‘aṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1970).

¹⁴² Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut, 1995).

¹⁴³ Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, 1972). See: *GAL*, 2:39.

¹⁴⁴ Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ‘alā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*, ed. Ḥasan Ismā‘īl Marwa (Beirut, 1992).

¹⁴⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta’rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8).

¹⁴⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d.).

supplemented with relevant documents and panegyrics. For al-Suyūṭī, the caliphate occupied a central interest, his personal loyalty to it informing both his *Weltanschauung* and historiography. The detailed information provided in al-Suyūṭī's retrospective biographies of (all but the last two) Cairo caliphs supplies a vital backbone to any study of the topic.

Like Ibn Taghrībirdī and Ibn Duqmāq, ‘Abd al-Bāṣit ibn Khalīl al-Malaṭī (d. 920/1515) came from a Mamluk house. The son of the Egyptian wazir and Syrian governor, Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī (d. 873/1468), ‘Abd al-Bāṣit al-Malaṭī studied Ḥanafī jurisprudence (*fiqh*) but ultimately served as a physician whose travels took him all over North Africa in the 860/1460s.¹⁴⁷ Among his historical output was *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*,¹⁴⁸ a *dhayl* to al-Dhahabī's *Duwal al-Islām*¹⁴⁹ which included reports of the years 744-896/1343-1491. Much of the *Nayl*'s content comes from al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*, and may well have contributed in turn to the historical writing of the last great historian of the Mamluk period, Muḥammad ibn Iyās.¹⁵⁰

Indeed, the current study is well-served by one of al-Suyūṭī's students, the *awlād al-nās* historian Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524) who wrote annals through the final years of the Mamluk sultanate in his *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*.¹⁵¹ Ibn Iyās was well-informed and took a great interest in the affairs of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. With so few sources available for the final two decades of the Mamluk sultanate, Ibn Iyās is truly indispensable. Drawing heavily on street gossip, correspondence, and rumors originating from his military contacts, the historian relays rare information about the fate of the last caliph al-Mutawakkil III after his exile to Istanbul by the Ottomans. The *Badā'i'*'s coverage of the last three caliphs of the dynasty is peerless among Mamluk sources.

Biographical Literature

Biographical dictionaries and the necrologies that chroniclers frequently appended to each annal, comprise an important genre that exhibits the self-view of a scholarly class that wished to document its own collective accomplishments as an alternative version of Islamic history concurrent with a “*siyāsa*-centric” version of official court chronicles with a focus on the

¹⁴⁷ Petry, *Twilight*, 8-9.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Abd al-Bāṣit ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī al-Ḥanafī [al-Malaṭī], *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2002). See: *GAL*, 2:54, no. 1, Suppl. 2:52-3.

¹⁴⁹ *GAL* Suppl. 2:45-6. See also: Massoud, *Chronicles*, 67.

¹⁵⁰ Massoud, *Chronicles*, 68-9.

¹⁵¹ Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982-4). See also: Little, *Introduction*, 92-4.

politics of the ruling class.¹⁵² Obituaries following annals, biographical dictionaries, and caliphal histories constitute a significant part of the source base for this study. Arabic biographical dictionaries developed naturally as an extension of ḥadīth literature and Islamic “*ta’rīkh*” history and stemmed from the demand for biographies of ḥadīth transmitters as well as caliphs, sultans, amirs, and other notables. Such dictionaries were often organized by field, place or time.

Biographical entries on the Cairo caliphs often provide genealogies, anecdotes, scholastic achievements, political involvement, and personal details. As members of the religious class, many of the authors such as al-Ṣafadī, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and al-Suyūṭī had personal dealings and even familial relationships with the contemporary Abbasids and discussed them candidly in biographical entries.

Among the most useful biographical dictionaries are two works by the Syrian litterateur Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 763/1363).¹⁵³ His colossal *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*¹⁵⁴ includes biographies of several Abbasid caliphs who had recently died, while his *A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*,¹⁵⁵ a smaller collection limited to his colleagues and other notables of the age, includes only a few.¹⁵⁶ Al-Ṣafadī relied on many informants and provides unique details of the caliphs and their influence on the Cairene masses.

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s famous centenary dictionary, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mi’a al-thāmina* and its brief *dhayl*,¹⁵⁷ contain entries on several of the Abbasid caliphs that lived in the eighth Islamic century which celebrate their careers or lament the tragedy that befell them as victims of a hazardous political climate. Ibn Ḥajar’s position as chief Shāfi’ī qadī brought him into close contact with several caliphs whom he wrote about with great affection and reverence, shedding light on the relationship between the caliphs and some members of the scholarly class.

¹⁵² Tarif Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191-7. For remarks on the simultaneous historical narrative presented by biographical dictionaries, see: Wadād al-Qādī, “Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars’ Alternative History of the Muslim Community,” in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteen Century Islamic World*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 23-75.

¹⁵³ *GAL*, 2:31-2.

¹⁵⁴ Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1972-).

¹⁵⁵ Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998).

¹⁵⁶ *GAL*, 2:32, no. 1 and 2, Suppl. 2:27-8. See also: Little, *Introduction*, 102-6. While information included in entries in both works is largely the same, both sources must be consulted. See: Donald Little, “Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of his Contemporaries,” in *Essays on Islamic Civilization Presented to Niyazi Berkes*, ed. Donald P. Little (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 190-211.

¹⁵⁷ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mi’a al-thāmina* (Hyderabad, 1972); idem, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina: fī a’yān al-mi’a al-tāsi’a*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998). See also: Little, *Introduction*, 106-8.

Al-Maqrīzī's unfinished biographical dictionary of his contemporaries, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-aʿyān al-mufīda*,¹⁵⁸ focused on Egyptian notables and contains biographies for at least two Abbasid caliphs as well as a brief dynastic history of the Cairo line down to the author's time. Ibn Taghrībirdī appended necrologies to his annals in *Nujūm* and *Hawādith* but composed lengthier entries in his biographical dictionary *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi baʿda al-wāfi*,¹⁵⁹ which included notables and scholars from 645-855/1248-1451. Ibn Taghrībirdī's entries on the Abbasid caliphs include summaries of their careers along with their relevance to Mamluk politics as well as some tidbits on their personal lives.

Another important centenary biographical dictionary is the *Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi*¹⁶⁰ by al-Sakhāwī, who followed the example of his teacher Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. The *Ḍawʿ* offers brief biographical sketches of the six caliphs as well as other members of the Abbasid family, male and female, who thrived in fifteenth century Cairo.¹⁶¹ A scathing critic of his contemporaries, al-Sakhāwī often relayed caustic criticisms of his rivals, though his coverage of the caliphs tends to be brisk and often derivative of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. Of particular value is the final volume of *al-Ḍawʿ* devoted to female notables, which provides rare information on several women of the Abbasid household, though limited to their marriages, children, and academic pursuits.¹⁶²

Travel Literature and Outside Observers

Several visitors to Egypt and Syria during the Mamluk period recorded their reflections on the flourishing Mamluk political system that included both sultan and caliph.¹⁶³ The celebrated Moroccan explorer Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 770/1368-9) visited the Mamluk realm during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and commented in his *Riḥla* on what he saw. His work also preserved accounts of the sultans of Delhi receiving investiture from the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo. More than a century later, the Iranian jurist Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī, who fled the advent of the Safavid

¹⁵⁸ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-aʿyān al-mufīda*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002). *GAL*, 2:39, Suppl. 2:37, no. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi baʿda al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1984-93). See also: *GAL*, 2:42, Suppl. 2:40, no. 4; Little, *Introduction*, 108-9.

¹⁶⁰ Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʿ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi* (Cairo, 1934-6).

¹⁶¹ The *Ḍawʿ* includes biographies of al-Mutawakkil I and his five sons; al-Mustaʿīn, al-Muʿtaḍid II, al-Mustakfi II, al-Qāʾim, and al-Mustanjid, covering a span of approximately 791-884/1389-1479. Al-Sakhāwī died in 903/1497 during the reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil II and thus did not include his biography.

¹⁶² For a study of this volume see: Huda Lutfi, "Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-Nisāʾ* as a Source for the Social and Economic History of Muslim Women during the 15th Century AD," *Muslim World* 71 (1981): 104-24.

¹⁶³ See: Ulrich Haarmann, "The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travelers," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 1-24.

Shah Ismā‘īl in 907/1501, idealized Mamluk Egypt and the Abbasids of Cairo in both his history *Ta’rīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*¹⁶⁴ and his work of advice literature, *Sulūk al-mulūk*.¹⁶⁵

Several Italian and Cretan visitors to the Mamluk realm in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century wrote about the Abbasid caliphs who sanctified Mamluk authority and acted as “popes of the heathens.” In 1384 a group of Florentine pilgrims including Leonardo di Frescobaldi and Simone Sigoli, visited the Mamluk sultanate and recorded local rumors of the Abbasid caliphs and wrote of their role in legitimating the sultans.¹⁶⁶ In the early fifteenth century, the Italian merchant and traveler Bertrando de Mignanelli wrote a Latin biography of the sultan Barqūq (784-801/1382-99) entitled *Ascensus Barcoch*, which took notice of the caliph’s symbolic importance on the political stage. The Cretan merchant Emmanuel Piloti also lived intermittently in Mamluk Egypt during the early Circassian period and described his understanding of the relationship between the Abbasid caliphs, the Mamluk sultans and the populace over whom they ruled.¹⁶⁷

B. Juristic and Advice Literature

Works described in this section include chancery manuals, treatises on government and leadership, and literature from the *Fürstenspiegel* genre. These works attempt to preserve and convey an idealized framework that demonstrates the authors’ image of norms of leadership in their societies, often based on classical examples. This is true of the investiture documents preserved in the chancery manuals, the theoretical treatises on the imamate, and the so-called “mirrors for princes” literature which sought to advise a Muslim ruler in his capacity as a divinely-ordained king.

¹⁶⁴ Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Ta’rīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, ed. John E. Woods; abridged trans. Vladimir Minorsky, *Persia in A.D. 1478-1490 (Turkmenia, 12)*, rev. ed. John E. Woods (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992).

¹⁶⁵ Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī Muvahḥid (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khvārazmī, 1984).

¹⁶⁶ See: Leonardo di Frescobaldi, “Pilgrimage of Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi to the Holy Land” in Theophilus Bellorini, Eugene Hoade, and Bellarmino Bagatti, tr., *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, 1948), 53-4; Simone Sigoli, “Pilgrimage of Simone Sigoli to the Holy Land” in *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, 197-8.

¹⁶⁷ Emmanuel Piloti, *L’Égypte au commencement du quinzième siècle d’après le traité d’Emmanuel Piloti de Crète, incipit 1420*, ed. Pierre-Herman Dopp (Cairo, 1950), 11.

Theoretical Works

By the Mamluk period, Muslim jurists had established a long tradition of defining the concept of Islamic religious and political leadership (*imāma*) that went back at least as early as the eighth century C.E. Few Mamluk treatises directly address the contemporary Abbasid caliphate and tend to deal with a non-specific notion of the *imām* which usually implies the government apparatus managed by the Mamluk sultan.

Mamluk period jurists, encyclopedists, and other authors grounded their expressions in the thought of earlier Muslim writers while also perhaps reflecting significant changes in the political reality. Jurists frequently expressed their thoughts on issues such as the necessity of the imamate, the conditions for eligibility and what portions of the government it comprised. The reasons such treatises were written have varied by author and climate but all of them sought to instruct the regime about the limits of the Mamluk sultan's authority and, according to modern historians, to defend the classical notion of the caliphate from new political actors and usurpers.¹⁶⁸ As source material, these treatises are somewhat problematic as they only reflect what a certain class among the intelligentsia believed the leadership and authority *should be*, rather than describe actual patterns. Nevertheless, they reveal the measuring stick used by contemporary intelligentsia to approach social and political realities. A sampling of this body of material will be explored in Chapter 3, including commentary on the works of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285), Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Jamā'a (d. 733/1333), Aḥmad Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), and Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418).

Advice Literature

While the Mamluk period is not known for copious advice literature, certain works were written with the intent of subtly advising those in power. Chapter 3 of the present work includes a discussion of some works of the genre including the "mirrors for princes" manual written for the short reign of the sultan Baybars al-Jāshnakīr (709/1309), *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal*¹⁶⁹ by the Abbasid-descended author Ḥasan ibn 'Abdallāh al-'Abbāsī (d. after 716/1316) which discusses court protocol. Both the *Mu'īd al-ni'am wa-mubīd al-niqam*¹⁷⁰ of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī

¹⁶⁸ H. A. R. Gibb, "Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 142-9.

¹⁶⁹ Ḥasan ibn 'Abdallāh al-'Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1989).

¹⁷⁰ Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Mu'īd al-ni'am wa-mubīd al-niqam*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hawwārī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2007).

(d. 771/1370) and the *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik*¹⁷¹ of Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī (d. 872/1468) also describe positions in the Mamluk government and offer advice for how best those in power might undertake their offices.

The Syrian scholar Aḥmad ibn ‘Arabshāh (d. 854/1450) produced a work of advice literature entitled *Fākihat al-khulafā’ wa-mufākahat al-ṣurafā*¹⁷², which drew upon the ancient *Kalīla wa Dimna* “mirrors for princes” literature. The *Fākiha* was largely an Arabic translation of an earlier Persian work, the *Marzubān-nāma* of Sa’d al-Dīn al-Warāwīnī, updated for the court of the Mamluk sultan Jaqmaq (842-57/1438-53).¹⁷³

Secretarial Literature

Chancery manuals are important to the present study for their preservation of both model and actual documents relevant to the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo, including investiture deeds and letters sent on behalf of the caliphs. Members of the professional bureaucratic class (*kuttāb*) compiled the encyclopedic manuals with the aim of assisting each incoming class of aspiring secretaries to draft documents, often by preserving useful letters, treaties, and investiture deeds meant to serve as templates in addition to important commentary on protocol and previous bureaucratic practice.¹⁷⁴ Several administrative encyclopedias exist for the Mamluk period, al-Nuwayrī’s *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*,¹⁷⁵ al-‘Umarī’s *al-Ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*,¹⁷⁶ Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh’s *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*,¹⁷⁷ and al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā’*.¹⁷⁸ The lesser known *munsha’āt* anthology of the fifteenth century chancery official Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī al-Azrārī, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshā’*¹⁷⁹, provides a number of Mamluk investiture deeds which reference the Abbasid caliph al-Mu’taḍid II (r. 816-45/1414-41).

¹⁷¹ Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī, *Kitāb zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Cairo: Dār al-‘Arab, 1988).

¹⁷² In this work I have consulted three editions of the *Fākihat al-khulafā’*, including the nineteenth century manuscript edition prepared by Georg W. Freytag as *Fructus imperatorum et iocatio ingeniosorum* (Bonn, 1832–52). I have also relied on more recent editions published by Muḥammad Rajab al-Najjār (Kuwait: Dār Su’ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1997) and Ayman ‘Abd al-Jābir al-Buḥayrī (Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-‘Arabiyya, 2001).

¹⁷³ *GAL*, 2:29-30, no. 3; Suppl. 2:25, no 3.

¹⁷⁴ Li Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 30.

¹⁷⁵ Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Sa’id ‘Ashūr (Cairo: 1985-92). See also: Little, *Introduction*, 24-32.

¹⁷⁶ Ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umarī, *al-Ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, ed. Samir al-Droubi (Karak, 1992).

¹⁷⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Cairo, 1987).

¹⁷⁸ *GAL*, 2:134, no. 1. For a useful comparative analysis of the latter three, see: Anne F. Broadbridge, “Diplomatic Conventions in the Mamluk Sultanate,” *Annales islamologiques* 41 (2007): 97-118.

¹⁷⁹ Abū Bakr ibn Ḥijja, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshā’*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Beirut, 2005).

Al-Nuwayrī divided his *Nihāyat al-arab* into five sections (*funūn*), each composed of varying numbers of chapters. The sections are devoted to broad concepts such as life in general, mankind, flora, and fauna. The third section includes a detailed discussion of the imamate and the caliphate, while the final section (about two thirds of the work), is a universal history ending with the author's own time during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. As a work of reference, al-Nuwayrī provides details on the government machinery of the Mamluk state and provides relevant information for the aspiring chancery secretary. The *Nihāya* provides some documents and letters of Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, including investiture documents concerning the reigning Abbasid caliphs.

The manual, *al-Ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, composed by the chancery official Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349) is also an important source of documents and templates emanating from the Mamluk chancery pertaining to the caliphs and sultans.¹⁸⁰ The work includes important descriptions of key offices in the Mamluk period as well as chapters on letters of appointment (*'ahd*, *taqlīd*, and *tafwīd* documents for caliphs, sultans, and other functionaries), as well as the mutual investiture (*mubāya'a*) which sheds light on how authority was transferred and understood in the Mamluk period. Al-'Umarī himself composed the investiture document for the caliph al-Ḥākim II (741-53/1341-52),¹⁸¹ and his lengthy encyclopedia *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* contains biographies of many of the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo in rhyming Arabic *saj'* prose.¹⁸²

Using the *Ta'rīf* of al-'Umarī and expanding upon it as a model (but with unique changes of his own), Ibn Nāṣir al-Jaysh wrote his *Tathqīf al-ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf* for a son that had followed his footsteps into the scribal trade. The *Tathqīf* references al-'Umarī frequently and draw upon the author's own thirty years of experience with chancery practices (748-78/1347-78). Ibn Nāṣir al-Jaysh's fifth chapter, which covers administrative documents including investiture deeds, supplies a useful template of a caliphal succession document which highlights many of the conventions and tropes that appear in the actual examples furnished later by al-Qalqashandī. The seventh chapter of the *Tathqīf*, which deals with miscellaneous titles of respect, lists appropriate appellations for sultans, caliphs, their heirs, and other regime notables.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ *GAL*, 2:141, no. 2.

¹⁸¹ See: Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'* (Cairo, 1963), 9:320-31; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8), 2:70; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

¹⁸² Aḥmad ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2010). See also: *GAL*, 2:141, no. 1; Little, *Introduction*, 40.

¹⁸³ Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions," 102-4.

Relying heavily on the earlier scribal manuals and supplementing them with new documents, the *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'*¹⁸⁴ of the legal scholar and chancery secretary Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī has long been an invaluable collection for modern researchers. The work contains numerous investiture deeds, succession contracts, ceremonial protocol information, titulary, and official correspondence relevant to the Abbasids of Cairo as well as to the broader history of the caliphate. Another work by the same author, *al-Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*,¹⁸⁵ dedicated to the caliph al-Mu'taḍid II, is a work which compiles many *Ṣubḥ* documents significant to the caliphate down to al-Qalqashandī's time. The *Ma'āthir* also includes a treatise on the imamate and a caliphal history organized by reign from Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (d. 12/634) down to al-Mu'taḍid II of Cairo.¹⁸⁶ The caliphal documents, often prefaced and commented upon by the author himself, provide descriptions of the office and display the proper way to address correspondence to an incumbent caliph as well as how outgoing correspondence issued in his name ought to appear. Al-Qalqashandī also sheds light on contemporary understandings of the social contract symbolized by the *bay'a*.

C. Documents

In the last forty years, documentary sources have widened the source base and altered the overall outlook for Mamluk historical studies.¹⁸⁷ Unlike other pre-modern Islamic dynasties such as the Ottomans, no comparable archive has survived for the Mamluk period. As a result, modern research depends largely on the few original documents excavated from undisturbed caches, and those copied by historians and chancery workers and preserved by Mamluk chronicles, chancery encyclopedias, and other literary sources.

It is largely by way of Mamluk chronicles and scribal encyclopedias that we now have many documents pertaining to the Abbasid caliphate in the form of investiture deeds, official announcements, succession and investiture deeds (*'uhūd*), and in some cases, the full texts of religious sermons and diplomatic correspondence attributed to individual Cairo caliphs (though in reality produced by chancery secretaries). Such documents serve as informal sources, since they were not necessarily created with the intention to serve future historians. Nevertheless, they may

¹⁸⁴ Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'* (Cairo, 1963).

¹⁸⁵ Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964). For some preliminary remarks on this work, see: İbrahim Kafesoğlu, "Kalkaşandi'nin bilinmeyen bir eseri: *Meâsirü 'l-Inâfe*," *Tarih Dergisi* 8, no. 11-12 (1956): 99-104.

¹⁸⁶ See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 2:111-220. Al-Qalqashandī also included a brief history of the Cairo caliphs in *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260-3, 274-6.

¹⁸⁷ Konrad Hirschler, "Studying Mamluk Historiography. From Source-Criticism to the Cultural Turn," in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 159-61.

be mined for information considering many Mamluk authors such as Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Ibn al-Furāt, and al-Suyūṭī recognized their importance and used them to illustrate their historical narratives.

Many investiture and succession documents go beyond naming relevant parties and delegating office holders. By prescribing the duties of the caliph and offering advice, such deeds provide a rare and important glimpse of what the Mamluk sultans and the authors of the documents expected of the Abbasid caliphs.¹⁸⁸

D. Archaeological Evidence

Inscriptions

Inscriptions made by the early Mamluk sultans, particularly Baybars and Qalāwūn, make frequent mention of the caliph and represent both the caliph’s place in Mamluk ideology and reflect the caliph’s use in regime propaganda. Several studies of Mamluk inscriptions and the place of the Abbasid caliphs have shed light on this topic.¹⁸⁹ There is also the 815/1412 inscription of the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn billāh in Gaza which may have been indicative of the caliph-sultan’s notions on the extent of his authority.¹⁹⁰

Research on the mausoleum of the Cairo Abbasids has analyzed the inscriptions there and repertoires of Arabic inscriptions for the years in question have compiled the use of the caliph in the sultan’s inscriptions as well as the inscriptions at the mausoleum which shed light on the Abbasid family. Inventories such as the *Répertoire chronologique d’épigraphie arabe*¹⁹¹ and the *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*¹⁹² supply relevant inscriptions from the Mamluk period which include use of caliphal titles such as *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn* in official inscriptions by the sultans Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Ashraf Khalīl. These works and several other studies have attempted to

¹⁸⁸ Chapter 5 explores the expectations for the Abbasid caliphate expressed in Mamluk investiture documents and deeds of succession.

¹⁸⁹ See: Denise Aigle, “Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām. Une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir,” *Studia Islamica* 97 (2003): 63-6; Reuven Amitai, “Some Remarks on the Inscription of Baybars at Maqam Nabi Musa,” in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, eds. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 50-1.

¹⁹⁰ L. A. Mayer, “A Decree of the Caliph al-Musta‘īn Billāh,” *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 11 (1945): 27-9; Mahmūd ‘Alī ‘Aṭā Allāh, *Niyābat Ghazza fī al-‘ahd al-Mamlūkī* (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1986), 236-7; M. M. Sadek, *Mamlūkische Architektur der Stadt Gaza* (Berlin, 1991), 98-9.

¹⁹¹ *Répertoire chronologique d’épigraphie arabe*, published under the direction of Etienne Combe, Jean Sauvaget and Gaston Wiet, 17 vols. (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1931-91).

¹⁹² *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum*, ed. Max van Berchem, Première Partie: *Egypte*, (1894, 1903), Deuxième Partie: *Syrie du Sud-Jérusalem*, 2 vols. (1922, 1927).

catalogue the numerous inscriptions made at the Abbasid mausoleum in Cairo which mention interred Abbasid family members and provide their dates of death.¹⁹³

Coins

Combined with weekly mention in the Friday congregational prayers, an Islamic ruler's ability to engage in the practice of *sikka*, or minting coinage in his name, was a powerful testament to his sovereignty. The names of the Abbasid caliphs were removed from Mamluk coinage early on and replaced with the name of the ruling Mamluk sultan. Several key studies of Mamluk numismatics have already dealt with the issue of the Abbasid caliphs. The most specialized study to date has been that of Heidemann, who devoted the majority of his book *Das aleppiner Kalifat* to the Abbasid caliphate and Mamluk coins.¹⁹⁴ Other important work on related topics has been carried out by Paul Balog,¹⁹⁵ Jere Bacharach,¹⁹⁶ Stephen Album,¹⁹⁷ Michael Bates,¹⁹⁸ Lutz Ilisch,¹⁹⁹ and Warren Schultz.²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ See the works of E. J. Rogers, M. M. Herz, and D. Russell cited above.

¹⁹⁴ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 205-371.

¹⁹⁵ Paul Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964).

¹⁹⁶ Jere L. Bacharach, "Circassian Monetary Policy: Silver," *Numismatic Chronicle* Series 7, vol. 11 (1971): 267-81.

¹⁹⁷ Stephen Album, "Power and Legitimacy: The Coinage of Mubārīz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar at Yazd and Kirman," *Le Monde Iranien et l'Islam* 2 (1974): 157-71.

¹⁹⁸ Michael Bates, "The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars I, Additions and Corrections," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 22 (1977), 161-82.

¹⁹⁹ Lutz Ilisch, "Beiträge zur mamlukischen Numismatik V: Inedita des Abbasidenkalifen Musta'in bi'llāh aus syrischen Münzstätten," *Münstersche Numismatische Zeitung* 13, no. 4 (1982): 39-42.

²⁰⁰ Warren C. Schultz, "The Silver Coinage of the Mamluk Caliph and Sultan al-Musta'in Bi'llah (815/1412)," in Bruno Callegger and Arianna D'Ottone (eds.) *The 2nd Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins* (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 2010), 210-9.

Chapter Two: A History of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo (659-923/1261-1517)

Prelude to the Cairo Caliphate (656-660/1258-1261)

When assessing the caliphate in the minds of medieval Muslims, it is puzzling that the institution resonated in Islamic society as much as it did, considering its loss of nearly all practical function long before the mid-thirteenth century. Nevertheless, it had been a catastrophe - - in 656/1258 the Mongols destroyed Islam's imperial stronghold in Baghdad and with it executed the Abbasid caliph al-Musta'sim (r. 640-56/1242-58), symbolic successor of the prophet Muḥammad and *amīr al-mu'minīn* or "Commander of the Faithful," a human representation of ecumenical Islamic leadership harkening back to the earliest days of the faith.²⁰¹ Recovering from the great ordeal of losing their caliph to infidel invaders was a formidable and unprecedented challenge the Muslim psyche grappled with for more than three years.²⁰² Our window into the zeitgeist comes from contemporary accounts recalling the events with a significant sense of despair and anguish.²⁰³

Attempts to Resurrect the Abbasid Caliphate (656-9/1258-61)

In the confusing atmosphere that followed the caliph's execution in Baghdad, members of the Abbasid family (authentic or not) began surfacing west of the Euphrates in the hope of filling the vacant office. Individual attempts to realize wide-ranging acknowledgment often followed similar scenarios involving extended periods of "political vagabondage" vaguely reminiscent of the post-Mongol Empire Central Eurasian phenomenon of *qazaqliq*.²⁰⁴ The

²⁰¹ Guy Le Strange, "The Story of the Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph from the Vatican MS of Ibn al-Furāt," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1900): 293-300. See also: John A. Boyle, "The Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6 (1961): 145-61.

²⁰² Ismā'il ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta'rīkh* (Beirut, 1966), 13:231; Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rīfat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1956-73), 1:2:451; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8), 2:52.

²⁰³ For contemporary accounts see: 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā'il Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-al-sābi'*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Kawtharī (Beirut, 1974), 198-9; Muḥammad ibn Sālim ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, vol. 6, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut, 2004), 212-7. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḡlullāh Hamadānī, *Jamī' al-tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Raushan and Muṣṭafā Mūsavī (Tehran: Alburz, 1373/1994-5), 2:994-1021. See also: Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 35-41; Ismā'il ibn 'Alī Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynhum 'Azab (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1999), 3:233-4; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), 376-81.

²⁰⁴ A term which appears in the Qipchaq steppe in the late fourteenth, early fifteenth century, *qazaqliq*, in the context of a political bid for power in which an upstart or renegade leaves a political situation but returns upon acquiring power. Famous *qazaqs* include Temūr, Babur, and the Timurid Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara who wandered the desert or steppe in hopes of securing a following for their political aims. For a

Abbasid claimant or pretender, typically an individual fleeing Baghdad alone or with a small band of helpers, often appeared and came under the protection of one of the bedouin tribes of northern Mesopotamia and Syria.²⁰⁵ Endeavors to find a patron more influential than the local tribal *shaykh* were frequently thwarted by the Mongols until the nearly subsequent and successful investitures of al-Mustanşir billāh at Cairo in 659-60/1261 and that of al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh in 661/1262. Their patrons, perhaps out of an ambiguous notion resembling the modern conception of “civic duty,” as well as a chance for their own self-aggrandizement, sent the newly invested caliphs back to Baghdad nominally in charge of anti-Mongol expeditions.²⁰⁶

Later chroniclers’ coverage of events connected to the advent of such claimants was often spotty. A local history of Baghdad attributed to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions that in 657/1259 a man claiming Abbasid descent arrived in Syria, although it ignores precise details of his identity and subsequent fate. Fakhr al-Dīn ibn al-Dāmaghānī, a former administrator for al-Musta‘şim who retained his position under the Mongols, was accused of freeing the Abbasid from prison near the old Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon (al-Madā’in) and later imprisoned. Despite sparse details, the account suggests sympathy for the Abbasid family and interest in aiding their return to preeminence.²⁰⁷

Vagabond Caliph: Al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh

Another claimant, Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan, ultimately invested as the caliph al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh (and eventual founding ancestor of the Abbasid line in Cairo), had a long and complicated journey to that office. After the siege of Baghdad, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan had gone into hiding in early 657/1259.²⁰⁸ Several companions aided the Abbasid prince: Zayn al-Dīn al-

working definition, see: Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 29-30. On the concept of *qazaqliq* in the Turkic context, see: Joo-Yup Lee, “The Formation of the Qazaqs and the Socio-Political Phenomenon of Qazaqliq” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2012).

²⁰⁵ For a discussion of these nomadic tribes see: Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 64-71; Stefan Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 80. For their part, bedouin tribes seemed interested in using Abbasid claimants to empower their own standing with the central government while acquiring prestige and influence at the expense of rival clans. See: Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “The Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 3 (1996): 489.

²⁰⁶ Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ, *Qaḍāyā min ta’rīkh al-mamālīk al-siyāsī wa-al-ḥaḍārī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M* (Beirut: al-Furāt, 2003), 137-8.

²⁰⁷ Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Ḥawāḍith al-jāmi’a wa-al-tajārib al-nāfi’a fī al-mi’a al-sābi’a* (Baghdad, 1932), 338.

²⁰⁸ Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl mir’āt al-zamān* (Hyderabad, 1954), 1:484; Abū Bakr ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi’ al-ghurar* (Cairo, 1960-92), 8:86; Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Kitāb*

Ḥākimī known as Ibn al-Bannā', his brother Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, and Najm al-Dīn ibn al-Mashā'.²⁰⁹ Another source indicates that Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan spent time in the captivity of Mongol authorities who, as part of a policy of eliminating Abbasid family members, had intended to immure him.²¹⁰ The builder commissioned with the gruesome task, (possibly this same Ibn al-Bannā'), took pity on the prince and instead abetted his escape.²¹¹ With few resources the party fled westward in Jumādā II 657/May-June 1259 into the protective custody of the Khafāja bedouin active on the lower Euphrates near al-Raḥba.²¹²

The official claim of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan as a fourth generation descendant of the caliph al-Mustarshid (d. 529/1135) although impossible to verify, was unquestioned by his bedouin hosts.²¹³ It is difficult to determine *when* Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan took the regnal title (*laqab*) al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh. It may have been as early as his departure from Baghdad while he lived among the Khafāja who may have fancied themselves nobles and king-makers.²¹⁴ On the recommendation of Jamāl al-Dīn Mukhtār al-Sharābī, another Baghdad refugee, Ḥusayn ibn Fallāh, amir of the Khafāja, forwarded al-Ḥākim and his companions to Syria for what some chroniclers interpreted as the "common good" for the sake of Islam.²¹⁵ As he resumed travels westward, al-Ḥākim worked through the echelons of the Āl Faḍl bedouin, initially as a guest of Zāmil ibn 'Alī al-Ḥudhayfa²¹⁶ of the Āl 'Alī branch and later his cousin, the more influential bedouin chieftain 'Īsā ibn Muhannā (d. 683/1284) of the Āl Faḍl, a man who wielded considerable influence in northern Syria and the Jazīra in the latter thirteenth century.²¹⁷

al-nahj al-sadīd wa-al-durr al-farīd fī-mā ba'da ta'rīkh Ibn al-'Amīd or *Histoire des sultans mamlouks*, ed. and tr. Edgard Blochet (Paris, 1911, 1920, 1932), 92; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382.

²⁰⁹ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:483-4; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:86; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 92; Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 6:317; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382; Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1990-2000), 48:80; Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal wa-athār al-uwal fī al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Fahmī Sa'd and Aḥmad Ḥutayt (Beirut, 1992), 2:204.

²¹⁰ It is not entirely certain that the Mongols wished to eliminate the Abbasids. Mubārakshāh, one of the sons of the slain caliph al-Musta'ṣim received permission to live under Mongol rule in Baghdad. Heidemann suggests the Mongols may even have considered establishing Mubārakshāh as a puppet caliph of their own. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 179.

²¹¹ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi' ibn 'Alī al-'Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sirriya al-muntaza'a min al-sīra al-Zāhiriyya*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 54-5.

²¹² Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:484; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:317; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:80; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 92; Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-a'yān al-mufīda*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), 2:207; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382.

²¹³ For a study of the caliph's genealogy, see: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 71-5.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 76-7.

²¹⁵ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:484; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 93; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:207-8.

²¹⁶ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:484-5; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:86-7. According to al-Suyūṭī, the Abbasid prince first stayed with Ḥusayn ibn Fallāh of the Banū Khafāja, see: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382.

²¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208. 'Īsā ibn Muhannā was ultimately recognized as *amīr al-'arab* by successive Mamluk sultans. See: al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:485; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:80; al-Suyūṭī,

‘Īsā ibn Muhannā was swift to notify Ayyubid authorities of his visitors from the east. As acting head of the unraveling Ayyubid confederation, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (648-58/1250-60) ordered that the Abbasid be brought to Damascus.²¹⁸ Al-Nāṣir Yūsuf had faithfully minted coins in the name of the deceased caliph al-Musta‘ṣim for several months in 657/1259 and may have been anxious to renew his caliphal sanction.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, negotiations for al-Ḥākim’s passage to Damascus abruptly crumbled with the first wave of Mongol attacks in northwestern Mesopotamia and Syria in 657/1259-60 at Ḥarrān, al-Bīra, and Aleppo, forcing him to stay among the Āl Faḍl.²²⁰ The Mongols seized Damascus and al-Nāṣir Yūsuf fled to Cairo, abandoning Ayyubid claims on the city.²²¹

In contrast to al-Nāṣir Yūsuf’s general unpreparedness to meet the Mongol challenge, the upstart forces of the Mamluks (former slave-soldiers imported by the last powerful Ayyubid ruler al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb), led by the sultan al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz (657-8/1259-60), met them in Ramaḍān 658/September 1260 at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in Palestine and ultimately crushed what remained of the Mongols’ Syrian forces, pushing them back behind the Euphrates.²²² Victory at ‘Ayn Jālūt furnished the Mamluks with prestige as valiant warriors, strengthening their hold in Egypt while aiding their consolidation of Syria. To better oversee the absorption of al-Nāṣir Yūsuf’s old Syrian domains after ‘Ayn Jālūt, Quṭuz personally spent time in Damascus.²²³

Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’, 382. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 77-9; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 64-5; Mona F. Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate: The Trauma and Aftermath of 1258 and 1924” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 141.

²¹⁸ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:485; al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb duwal al-Islām* (Hyderabad, 1944-6), 125; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:317; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382.

²¹⁹ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 81. Years before his death, the caliph al-Musta‘ṣim had also tried to mediate the deteriorating relationship between al-Nāṣir Yūsuf and the nascent Mamluk regime that had taken control in Egypt. See: R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 323-4.

²²⁰ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:349-58, 485; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:238-45; Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Sa‘īd ‘Ashūr (Cairo: 1985-92), 30:40-2; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:53, 87; al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125-6; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 93; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:317; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382.

²²¹ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 211-2; Ghirīghūryūs ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Ta’rīkh mukhtaṣar al-Duwal* (Beirut, 1958), 279; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 48-9; idem, Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-Turkiyya: Tārīkh dawlat al-mamālīk al-Baḥriyya fī al-fatra min 648-711 hijriyya* (Cairo, 1987), 43; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:349, 365; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:240-1. See: Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 333-63; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 26-35.

²²² Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 50-2; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār: ta’rīkh al-dawla al-ayyūbiyya wa-dawlat al-mamālīk al-baḥriyya ḥattā sanat 702 H.*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo, 1993), 11; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:485. The majority of the Mongol army had withdrawn from the region to attend the *quriltai* council which would decide the next Great Khān after the death of Möngkē.

²²³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 45-8.

There, ‘Īsā ibn Muhannā resumed the process of alerting the new political strongman of al-Ḥākim’s eligibility for the vacant caliphate.²²⁴

Quṭuz dispatched his amir Qiliġ al-Baghdādī to offer the oath of allegiance (*bay’a*) to al-Ḥākim on his behalf and ordered him to escort the caliph on a mission to reclaim Baghdad from the Mongols. Together, forces under their control overpowered several towns near the Euphrates such as ‘Āna, Ḥadītha, Hīt, and al-Anbār. Al-Ḥākim’s forces briefly clashed with Mongol forces roughly twelve miles north of Baghdad at al-Fallūja in late Dhū al-Ḥijja 658/1260.²²⁵ The tide turned when the Mongol commander Qarābughā advanced with a superior army and forced the caliph’s men to retreat to Salāmiyya, the Syrian base of ‘Īsā ibn Muhannā.²²⁶

Quṭuz’s long term plans for the caliphate cannot be known though some Mamluk sources report his order for ‘Īsā’ ibn Muhannā to send al-Ḥākim to Cairo for investiture at a later date.²²⁷ As reward, the bedouin amir received Salāmiyya as an *iqṭā’* from the Mamluk sultan, while wider recognition as caliph eluded al-Ḥākim once again. Two months after ‘Ayn Jālūt a cadre of Mamluk amirs assassinated Quṭuz. One of the co-conspirators, Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, ultimately rose to power as sultan of Egypt and continued the task of consolidating Syria.²²⁸

²²⁴ Mamluk sources depict Quṭuz as receptive to the idea: “When we return to Egypt, send him to us so that we can restore him, God willing.” See: Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:87. ‘Īsā ibn Muhannā was also eager to ensure that Quṭuz would honor landholdings (*khubz*) promised to him by al-Nāṣir Yūsuf. See: al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:485; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 93-4; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:208.

²²⁵ Mamluk sources report Mongol losses upwards of 1,000 and keep Muslim losses at less than eight. Recent scholarship has critiqued these problematic and unlikely numbers: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 88-9; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 62.

²²⁶ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:485-6; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:80-1; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh al-‘allāma Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1961), 5:941; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:208; al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382-3. While ‘Īsā ibn Muhannā himself had not participated in the campaign, it is likely that he subordinated a portion of his strength to the caliph. According to Heidemann, booty and territorial expansion at the expense of the Khafāja tribe appear to be among the campaign’s immediate objectives. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 89.

²²⁷ Several attempts to bring the caliphate to Egypt predate that of Quṭuz. It is noteworthy that during the Tulunid and Ikhshidid periods of the ninth and tenth centuries, Egyptian rulers sought to attract the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad to the Egyptian capital to reinforce their rule. See: ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk wa-rusūmuhum fī Miṣr: dirāsa shāmila lil-nuzum al-siyāsiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyya, 1979), 1:33; Thierry Bianquis, “Autonomous Egypt from Ibn Tūlūn to Kāfūr, 868-969,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 95, 101-2, 113; Jere L. Bacharach, “The Career of Muḥammad Ibn Ṭughj al-Ikhshīd, a Tenth-Century Governor of Egypt,” *Speculum* 50, no. 4 (1975): 586-611; idem, “Al-Ikhshīd, the Ḥamdānids and the Caliphate: The Numismatic Evidence,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 3 (1974): 360-70; Hugh Kennedy, “Miṣr: From the ‘Abbāsids to the Fāṭimids 750-969,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 7:161.

²²⁸ Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 282; Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuẓhat al-mālīk wa-al-mamlūk: fī mukhtaṣar sīrat man waliya Miṣr min al-mulūk: yu’arrikhu min ‘aṣr al-farā’ina wa-al-anbiyā’ ḥattā sanat 717 H*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2003), 150; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 53-5; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 11-2; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:370-4; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:247; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:13-6; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:87; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 93-4; Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-*

Al-Ḥākim and ‘Īsā ibn Muḥannā secured no immediate advantages, though in the long run, even fleeting acknowledgement from a Mamluk sultan increased the prestige of the newly arrived caliph among the bedouin and the unstable situation in Syria encouraged other Abbasid claimants to make for Cairo, eager to fill the demand in regional politics.²²⁹

Al-Ḥākim's Search for Lasting Investiture

News of al-Ḥākim did not escape the new government of Baybars. After several months in Salāmiyya, Ṭaybars al-Wazīrī, the sultan's governor of Damascus, summoned the caliph and his companions to Damascus in Rajab 659/June 1261.²³⁰ Unbeknownst to al-Ḥākim, several days earlier another Abbasid survivor of the Mongol siege, Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir, the soon-to-be al-Mustaṣir billāh of Cairo, had arrived in the city.²³¹ Without telling al-Ḥākim, and perhaps keeping Baybars aware of the situation, Ṭaybars al-Wazīrī sent the Abbasid survivor to the Egyptian capital along with Ibn al-Bannā' and his small band of Turkmen riders. At some point during the journey, al-Ḥākim learned that a caliph had already been invested by Baybars only three days earlier and that he himself was likely heading to incarceration or worse. Fearing the uncertainty that awaited in Cairo, al-Ḥākim fled for the safety of the Syrian towns north of Salāmiyya.²³²

In the caliph's absence, ‘Īsā ibn Muḥannā had fortified Salāmiyya against a siege by the Syrian freebooter warlord, Āqqūsh al-Barlī, a former mamlūk of the Ayyubid al-Malik al-‘Azīz Muḥammad of Aleppo (613-34/1216-36).²³³ Coming to power on the strength of the ‘Azīziyya and Nāṣiriyya mamlūk factions, Āqqūsh al-Barlī became a major impediment to Baybars's consolidation of Syria. Āqqūsh craved official recognition from the Mamluk sultan and was desperate for leverage in his negotiations with Cairo. He briefly seized Aleppo and successfully frustrated Mamluk forces for several months. As bedouin control in Salāmiyya grew increasingly

Manḥal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi ba'da al-wāfi, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1984-93), 3:451; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382.

²²⁹ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318.

²³⁰ On Ṭaybars al-Wazīrī, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manḥal*, 7:35-6.

²³¹ See below. Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:441, 2:94-5; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:72; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:448; Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963-72), 7:109; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:52; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 381; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal wa-athār al-uwal fī al-ta'rīkh*, Fahmī Sa'd, Aḥmad Ḥutayt (eds), Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1992, 2:202. Amitai-Preiss suggests the order came from Hülāgū himself, but does not mention his source. See: *Mongols and Mamluks*, 56.

²³² Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:81; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:208.; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 383.

²³³ On the different spellings of the name "Āqqūsh," see: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 111; Amitai-Preiss, "Fall and Rise of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate," 490-1.

unstable, al-Ḥākim and his companions drifted towards Āqqūsh al-Barlī's camp at Aleppo.²³⁴ United by a common interest in wider recognition for their respective ambitions, it was ultimately through Āqqūsh in Aleppo that al-Ḥākim acquired substantial acknowledgment as caliph of northern Syria and Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, Āqqūsh al-Barlī fled the city when Baybars sent the amir Sanjar al-Ḥalabī to take over, even though the latter only established short term gains before the later return of Āqqūsh.²³⁵

After restoring influence in Aleppo for a second time in late Rajab 659/June 1261, Āqqūsh gave *bay'a* to al-Ḥākim, minted coins in his name and ordered his mention in the Friday sermon.²³⁶ The pair had little choice but to flee Aleppo again when Baybars renewed his efforts and Āqqūsh al-Barlī retreated to the former Mongol stronghold of Ḥarrān.²³⁷ Mamluk sources make little mention of al-Ḥākim after his flight from Aleppo, but recent scholarship suggests that knowledge of Baybars's investiture of al-Mustanṣir was widespread in Syria in this period and Cairo could only have interpreted the rival caliphate as a provocation.²³⁸ Nevertheless, Āqqūsh renewed the pledge to al-Ḥākim in Ḥarrān, most likely at the behest of local notables including the Banū Taymiyya.²³⁹ Bolstered by a resounding Abbasid endorsement, Āqqūsh emerged as a formidable regional threat to Baybars. His investiture of al-Ḥākim secured prestige and important oaths of loyalty from various elements in the towns and cities around Aleppo and Ḥarrān.²⁴⁰

After returning to recapture Aleppo from Sanjar al-Ḥalabī in Ramaḍān/August, Āqqūsh al-Barlī wrote to offer his obedience, but the Mamluk sultan only agreed to accept it in person in Cairo.²⁴¹ It was at this point that Āqqūsh and al-Ḥākim learned that Baybars had sent forces to Damascus with the purpose of dividing them: half were to drive Āqqūsh from Aleppo while a

²³⁴ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 48:81; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208.

²³⁵ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 215-6; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:250-1; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 48:76; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:113; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'riḫ al-khulafā'*, 383; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:204. On al-Ḥākim's *bay'a* in Aleppo, see: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 133.

²³⁶ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 215; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-'ibar fī khabar man ghabar* (Kuwait, 1960-6), 5:252; idem, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 49:5; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'riḫ al-khulafā'*, 382-3; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:204.

²³⁷ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:105; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 48:75-6; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:113.

²³⁸ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 137.

²³⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 48:81; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'riḫ al-khulafā'*, 383. One notable participant was 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, the father of the famous thirteenth century theologian Ibn Taymiyya.

²⁴⁰ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 215-6; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; idem, *A'yān al-'aṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998), 1:209; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*, 48:75-6; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208; Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 127.

²⁴¹ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 139.

smaller portion led by the caliph al-Mustanşir, were to drive the Mongols from Baghdad (discussed below).²⁴²

As if in competition, Āqqūsh equipped al-Ḥākim with about 1,000 Turkmen and other followers for an adventure against the Mongols and sent the caliph to join the expedition of al-Mustanşir. Āqqūsh then withdrew back to Ḥarrān as Baybars's new governor took over command in Aleppo.²⁴³

As al-Ḥākim and his forces traveled along the east bank of the Euphrates into Iraq, Āqqūsh and his army were drawn into conflict and devastated by the Mongols at Sinjār.²⁴⁴ Āqqūsh escaped and later went to submit to Baybars in Cairo in Dhū al-Ḥijja 660/October 1262.²⁴⁵

The Shahrāzūriyya Kurds

As two separate caliphal campaigns to liberate Baghdad got under way, a third Abbasid claimant appeared in Syria alleging that he was the son of a certain "al-Amīr al-Gharīb."²⁴⁶ The claimant brought himself to the attention of the Shahrāzūriyya Kurds, Kurdish tribesmen comprised of nearly 3,000 fighters, including veterans of 'Ayn Jālūt.²⁴⁷ Largely scattered by the Mongol troops of Hülāgū, they remained in Syria and performed the *bay'a* to the son of al-Amīr al-Gharīb as caliph in Gaza.²⁴⁸ However, the effort was swiftly squashed by either the Ayyubid ruler al-Nāṣir Yūsuf or Baybars and also by the Mongol invasion of Syria in 658/1260. The

²⁴² See below. Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; Maḥmūd al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān: 'aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 1:310-1; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:113-4.

²⁴³ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:76, 81; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 383.

²⁴⁴ Muḥammad ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā' al-Shām wa-al-Jazīra* (Damascus, 1953), 3:211; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:492-3; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:88-9; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:81-3; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318.

²⁴⁵ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 77; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:492-3; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn*, 51; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:59-60; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:79.

²⁴⁶ Al-Amīr al-Gharīb (d. 614/1217-8) was allegedly an earlier émigré from Irbil claiming descent from the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (575-622/1180-1225). On the Shahrāzūriyya incident, see: Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 217-8; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 179-80; Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 130-1.

²⁴⁷ On the Shahrāzūriyya, see: David Ayalon, "The Wāfidiyya in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture* 25 (1951): 97; R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 341-4; P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 86; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London, 1986), 12; Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 115. On their cooperation with Baybars, see: Winslow Williams Clifford, *State Formation and the Structure of Politics in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 648-741 A.H./1250-1340 C. E.*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 86-8.

²⁴⁸ On the Shahrāzūriyya presence in Gaza and their attempt to establish an Abbasid caliph, see: Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 217; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 33-4; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:365; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:336.

claimant was arrested, and in confinement, encountered an ambitious qadi by the name of Kamāl al-Dīn Khiḍr al-Kurdī. While incarcerated, the pair schemed to form a fledgling government with the son of al-Amīr al-Gharīb as Abbasid caliph and Khiḍr al-Kurdī as his wazir. The plans came to naught when the caliphal claimant expired in jail, though the undaunted qadi continued the preparations after joining forces with a son of his deceased comrade upon release. Khiḍr al-Kurdī courted the support of local notables and continued to draw on Shāhrazūriyya interest. He made formal announcements on behalf of his imaginary regime which drew the attention and ire of Baybars. The Mamluk sultan promptly ordered his arrest and gibbeted the disgraced qadi on 18 Jumādā II 660/10 May 1262.²⁴⁹

Attempts to establish an Abbasid as caliph after 656/1258 may have been a response to public concern over the welfare of the caliphate. It must not be overlooked that many of the major regional players had hoped to curry favor with popular sentiment to serve their immediate political interests. Bedouin groups in the hinterland could and did use access to their own Abbasid prince to gain leverage over their peers, and in the process, managed to amass rewards and privileges for themselves by bringing claimants to the attention of more powerful rulers with ambitions of their own.²⁵⁰

By acting as a pitchman for al-Ḥākim, ‘Īsā ibn Muḥannā made the rounds with potential patrons on more than one occasion. In this, the bedouin chief succeeded: Qutūz rewarded him for looking after the caliph and allowed him to keep lands promised by the Ayyubids. Baybars likewise honored him and made him *amīr al-‘arab*. A study of this period demonstrates that long before his investiture in Cairo, al-Ḥākim already enjoyed political prestige and amassed experience fighting the Mongols on several occasions. He had received a pledge of investiture from the proxy of a Mamluk sultan and was treated with a modicum of respect as a brother-in-arms by powerful and influential commanders such as ‘Īsā ibn Muḥannā and Āqqūsh al-Barlī.

A Caliph for Cairo: The Investiture and Campaign of al-Mustaṣṣir billāh (659-60/1261)

The first Abbasid claimant to arrive in Mamluk Cairo was Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir, about whom little is known prior to the Mongol invasion of Baghdad. He was said to have been of a dark brown, almost black complexion,²⁵¹ and claimed to be the son of the Baghdad

²⁴⁹ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 217; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:170-1; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 179-80; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 130-1.

²⁵⁰ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 76-80; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 64-71.

²⁵¹ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:312; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:486; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:253-4; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:93; Aḥmad ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2010), 15:265; Muḥammad ibn al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn al-tawārīkh*, ed. Fayṣal

caliph al-Ẓāhir (622-3/1225-6), brother of the caliph al-Mustansir billāh (623-40/1226-42) and at the time of the Mongol invasion, a prisoner of his nephew, the reigning caliph al-Musta‘shim.²⁵² Al-Mustansir and a small escort of companions had headed west to the Jazīra and found safety and honor among the Banū Khafāja²⁵³ spending several months wandering rural areas with the tribesmen in search of support for his claims.²⁵⁴ In the company of a bedouin escort Aḥmad ibn al-Ẓāhir ultimately arrived at the Syrian oasis of al-Ghūṭa and two of Baybars’s amirs stationed near Damascus, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bunduqdār and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ṭaybars al-Wazīrī alerted the Mamluk sultan that a man from Iraq had arrived who might prove useful in the future. Baybars dispatched Sayf al-Dīn Qilij al-Baghdādī who had earlier delivered a pledge of allegiance to al-Ḥākim on behalf of Quṭuz. The sultan entrusted Qilij al-Baghdādī to confirm the man’s Abbasid identity. The Mamluk ruler instructed his Syrian officers to honor Aḥmad ibn al-Ẓāhir and guard him with chamberlains (*ḥujjāb*). Shortly thereafter, the Abbasid claimant arrived at the Cairo citadel on 9 Rajab 659/9 June 1261 and met Baybars amidst throngs of onlookers on “a very

al-Sāmīr and Nabīla ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Dāwūd (Baghdad, 1980), 20:252; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:293, 297; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:110; idem, *Manhal*, 2:75; Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i’ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982–4), 1:1:313. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 104; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 142.

²⁵² Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:312; Faḍlallāh ibn al-Ṣuqā‘ī, *Tālī kitāb waḥyāt al-a’yān*, ed. Jacqueline Sublet (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1974), 2 (Arabic), 2 (French); Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 7:72; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:168; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125; ‘Umar ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf, 1969), 2:303; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 81; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:825; Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā’* (Cairo, 1963), 3:260; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:448; idem, *al-Dhahab al-masbūk fī dhikr man ḥajja min al-khulafā’ wa-al-mulūk*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2000), 89-90; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Qudṣī, *Kitāb duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya: wa-dhikr mā zahara lī min ḥikam Allāh al-khaṭīyya fī jalbi ṭā’ifat al-Atrāk ilā al-diyār al-Miṣriyya* ed. Ṣubḥī Labīb and Ulrich Haarmann (Beirut, 1997), 10; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109; idem, *Manhal*, 2:72-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:52; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:312-3. Al-Mustansir and his entourage related the story of his origin which was promptly accepted as valid by attending ‘*ulamā’*. Most chroniclers agree on his name and lineage. According to al-Kutubī, the Mongols freed the caliph before he went to live among the bedouin. See: *‘Uyūn*, 20:251.

²⁵³ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Ẓāhir*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 99; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231. According to al-Yūnīnī, al-Mustansir was also known as “al-Khafājī.” See: *Dhayl*, 1:255. Several sources also identify the bedouin group that had honored the caliph as the Banū Muhārish: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 15; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:441, 2:95; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:72; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:407; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 81; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109. See also: Peter Thorau, *Sultan Baibars I. von Ägypten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vorderen Orients im 13. Jahrhundert*, “Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients” (1987), translated by P. M. Holt as *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1992), 111-2; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 95. Khuwayṭir has also speculated as to why the caliph may have spent time among the bedouin. See: *Baibars the First*, 34-6.

²⁵⁴ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:441, 2:94-5; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:448; idem, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 90; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:74; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:312-3. Mamluk sources identified few members of al-Mustansir’s entourage, except for his *mamlūk* companion Quṭb al-Dīn Sanjar ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Mustansirī (d. 667/1268-9) known as Yāghuz (or Bāghuz), a gifted storyteller and orator. See: al-Yūnīnī *Dhayl*, 2:459-60; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:406; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:67-8.

memorable day.”²⁵⁵ Even prominent Christians and Jews carrying their holy books came out to greet Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir, who rode through the streets toward the citadel on a horse decorated with Abbasid heraldry. Baybars arranged lodging for Aḥmad in the tower of the citadel while Mamluk officials spent the next several days formalizing plans for the debut of the Abbasid prince in their capital.²⁵⁶

On 13 Rajab 659/13 June 1261, Baybars, seating himself beside Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir, assembled an audience of state and religious officials, jurists, scholars, amirs, Sufis, and merchants at the Columned or Pillar Hall (*Qā‘at al-‘Awāmīd*) for a grand state ceremony. Chroniclers detailed the demure of the occasion; Baybars sat on the floor, on particularly good behavior in the presence of the caliph, amid a noticeable absence of seats, a podium, or any of the other trappings of a formal occasion. The ostensible purpose of the assembly was to hold a series of successive public confirmations of Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir’s Abbasid identity and to formally appoint him to the caliphate.²⁵⁷ First his bedouin traveling companions acknowledged that Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir was indeed an “*imām*” of the Abbasid house and the uncle of the last caliph al-Musta‘ṣim. Next, the religious scholars presented a more formal testament naming Aḥmad as an authentic candidate whose noble pedigree satisfied the ‘*ulamā*’ enough for them to offer the *bay‘a* pledge on behalf of the Islamic establishment and the Muslim community (*umma*) at large. The

²⁵⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 99; Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 150-1; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60-1; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 47; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 15; Ibn al-Ṣuqā‘ī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 2 (French); Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Ḥusn*, 37; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:327, 30:29; 30:29; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:73; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 74, 82; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:251; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta‘rīkh*, 5:825; Ibrāhīm Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī siyar al-khulafā’ wa-al-mulūk wa-al-salāṭīn* (Mecca, 1982), 180; idem, *Nuzhat al-anām fī Ta‘rīkh al-Islām*, 628 H/1230 M-659 H/1261 M ed. Samīr Ṭabbāra (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1999), 276; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260, 274-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:448; idem, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-i‘tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (London, 2002), 3:783; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:207; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:293-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:74; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo, 1997), 1:236; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:52-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:1:313.

²⁵⁶ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60-1; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 15; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:441-2, 2:95; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Ḥusn*, 37; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:73; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 82; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:251; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231-2; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:449; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:783; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:294, 297; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1: 236; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:53. For P. M. Holt, Baybars’s eagerness to install the caliph is a clear indicator of al-Mustanṣir’s importance to the Mamluk sultan’s political strategy. See: “Al-Mustanṣir (II) bi’llāh,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 7:729.

²⁵⁷ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60-1. On the venue of the ceremony, see: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial,” *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 51-4; Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 93-4.

chief Shāfi'ī qadi Tāj al-Dīn ibn Bint al-A'azz recorded the caliph's genealogy as sound before reading it to the assembly.²⁵⁸

The *bay'a* itself was the most noteworthy aspect of the summit and introduced an important protocol for subsequent ceremonial practice involving the Abbasid caliphate.²⁵⁹ Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir ultimately received *bay'a* from the elite of Baybars's regime according to descending rank.²⁶⁰ The order which members (*al-nās*) pledged to the caliph sheds light on the hierarchical structure of the Mamluk system. Some sources claim the Mamluk sultan himself was first to offer allegiance to Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir as al-Mustanṣir, while alternative reports of the *bay'a* emphasize the participation and consent of high level '*ulamā*'. Many later accounts diverge from the "official" version of Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and assert that Ibn Bint al-A'azz first offered allegiance to al-Mustanṣir after having recorded the lineage of the caliph.²⁶¹ Also of universal repute in late Ayyubid and early Mamluk scholarly circles was the independent scholar 'Izz al-Dīn 'Abd al-Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660/1261), who attended the proceedings and added his

²⁵⁸ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 213; Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 100; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:312-3; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60-1; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 47; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 15-6; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:442, 2:96, 123, 163; Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 2 (French); Shāfi'ī ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 37; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:327, 30:29; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:252-3; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:407; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:303-4; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 82; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 20:251-2; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:825; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 180-1; idem, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 276-7; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:449-50; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:783; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:293-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109; idem, *Manhal*, 2:73, 75-6; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:236-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:53; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:313-4; al-Qaramānī, *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:202. There was no other source of confirmation for Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir's identity beyond the caliph's immediate entourage and Mamluk authorities accepted the claim at face value. According to Ira M. Lapidus, the '*ulamā*' accepted the transfer of the caliphate to Cairo in order to legitimize and symbolize their loyalty to the Mamluk regime, thereby demonstrating their acceptance of Mamluk protection. See: *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1967), 134.

²⁵⁹ Indeed caliphal investiture of Mamluk sultans became standard practice followed scrupulously in all but a few cases. It must be stressed, however, that the Mamluk incarnation of the Abbasid caliphate was fluid and could be changed or sidelined based on the dictates of new political realities.

²⁶⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 16; Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 2 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:95; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:258-9; idem, *Siyār*, 23:170; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:825; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 182; idem, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:450; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:73.

²⁶¹ Many later chroniclers incorporated Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's report that Baybars had been first to extend his hand in *bay'a* to the new caliph. See: *Rawḍ*, 100; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:313; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 61; Shāfi'ī ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 37; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:328, 30:29; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:450; al-Qaramānī, *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:202. However, some later authors reported that others were first to pledge *bay'a*. Those who listed Ibn bint al-A'azz before Baybars included: al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:442, 2:96; Shāfi'ī ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 37; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:73; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 20:252; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 7:385; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:450; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 181; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:110; idem, *Manhal*, 2:75. Others still claimed Ibn 'Abd al-Salām had been the first: Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964), 2:112; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:293-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:53; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā*, 381.

own approval to the *bay'a* ceremony.²⁶² In his own recollection of the ceremony Ibn 'Abd al-Salām apparently said:

When we commenced with the *bay'a* for al-Mustanşir, I said to al-Malik al-Zāhir (Baybars): “Pledge *bay'a* to him,” to which [the Mamluk sultan] replied “I cannot do it well (*mā uḥsinu*), so give him *bay'a* first and I shall follow you.”²⁶³

Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's account implies that Baybars had been obliged to learn how to perform the *bay'a* ritual from an important Muslim scholar, as a precaution to ensure that religious protocol was properly observed in restoring the caliphate. Islamic rulings on slave status had originally made Ibn 'Abd al-Salām reluctant to lend support to Baybars. On the other hand, a pledge to a recognized Abbasid candidate secured critical support for the sultanate from an important religious authority.²⁶⁴

Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir received the *laqab* al-Mustanşir billāh, which, like al-Hākim, he may have already assumed among his bedouin comrades, most likely as homage to his deceased brother.²⁶⁵ Immediately upon receiving *bay'a* as caliph, al-Mustanşir invested Baybars with the Islamic lands already in his possession as well as a preemptive authorization to rule any future

²⁶² Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:312; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 37; Abū al-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, 2:121; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:112. For Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's obituary, see: Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 77; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:505; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:66-77; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:235; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:293; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:286-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:313. See also: Jean-Claude Garcin, “Histoire, opposition politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le *Husn al-Muḥāḍarat* de Suyūṭī,” *Annales islamologiques* 7 (1967): 73-5; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 149-50.

²⁶³ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:408. Also quoted in Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 150.

²⁶⁴ Hoping to secure religious approval for his regime, Baybars showered Ibn 'Abd al-Salām with prestige and recognition. See: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:76. Ibn Iyās reported that Ibn 'Abd al-Salām instructed Baybars to sit across from the caliph. See: *Badā'i*, 1:1:313. Al-Suyūṭī, who later clashed with sultan Qāytbāy (1468-96), looked to Ibn 'Abd al-Salām as a symbol of religious resistance against the Mamluks. See: Garcin, “Histoire,” 69-73; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 149-50.

²⁶⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 100; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:313; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 61; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:97, 123; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 20:252; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:825; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 181; idem, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 277; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:111; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:451; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:297; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:53; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:314. Regardless of the reasons behind the choice, several authors have noted the unique repetition of a regnal name among two brothers (which they understood as an unprecedented development in Abbasid history). According to al-Yūnīnī, the caliph had received the title immediately after his *bay'a*. See also: Richard Hartmann, “Zur Vorgeschichte des 'abbāsidschen Schein-Chalifates von Cairo,” in *Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse*, Jahrg. 1947, 7 (1950): 4-5; David Ayalon, “Studies on the Transfer of the 'Abbasid Caliphate from Baghdad to Cairo,” *Arabica* 7 (1960): 42-4; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue: le khalifat abbaside du Caire,” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 20, no. 77-8 (1972): 14-5. Al-Qalqashandī believed the *laqab* “al-Hākim” was a deliberate reference to the Fatimid caliph of the same name, see: *Ma'āthir*, 2:145. Al-Suyūṭī believed using Fatimid *laqabs* for the Abbasids of Cairo was problematic: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 17. More recently, Stefan Heidemann discussed the possible Fatimid connotation to the titles, see: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 75-7.

conquests made at the expense of unbelievers (*kuffār*).²⁶⁶ To underscore Baybars as the guarantor of the caliphate, al-Mustanşir conferred the sobriquet “Associate of the Commander of the Faithful” (*qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn*) on the sultan which was subsequently struck on coins and included in inscriptions.²⁶⁷ These documents, in theory, attempt to convey Baybars as a symbolic delegate of the caliph enlisted to exercise caliphal powers on behalf of the Commander of the Faithful.

After the ceremony, Baybars sent announcements of the occasion to Syria and other parts of his realm. The letters, often read by a qadi in a public forum, demanded *bay’a* by proxy for the new caliph, and ordered coins be struck in the names of the Mamluk sultan and the Abbasid caliph who must likewise be mentioned in all subsequent Friday sermons.²⁶⁸ Once Cairo formally became the new home of the Abbasid caliphate, the *sharīf* ruler of Mecca, Abū Numayy recognized Mamluk suzerainty and abandoned his acknowledgment of the Hafsid caliph of Tunis who also coincidentally made use of the title al-Mustanşir.²⁶⁹

Clad in his family’s traditional black ecclesiastical garb, al-Mustanşir emerged some days later on 17 Rajab 659/17 June 1261 to deliver the Friday *khuṭba* before an elite crowd at the citadel mosque. The caliph’s emotional sermon championed the Abbasid line and solicited God’s assistance in *jihād* and blessings for the Prophet and his companions, as well as the sultan, before leading the congregational prayer with the people. Before adjourning, the Mamluk sultan, having been draped in a black Abbasid cloak by the caliph, showered the congregation with precious coins and later presented al-Mustanşir with cash gifts.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 100; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 61; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 16; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:328, 30:29; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:450; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 181; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:314.

²⁶⁷ Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 181-2. According to al-Suyūṭī, Baybars had been the first Mamluk sultan to use the title. See: *Husn*, 2:95. I discuss “*qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn*” further in Chapter 5.

²⁶⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 100-1; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 61; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 47; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 16; Shāfi’ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 37; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:328; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:73; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:170; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 182; idem, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:450; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:295-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:74; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:237; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 381; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:202.

²⁶⁹ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:226-8. The issue of whether or not the Mamluks paid homage to the Hafsid caliphate was raised by Richard Hartmann, and debunked by David Ayalon. See also: Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, “Les relations entre l’Égypte et l’Ifriqiya aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles d’après les autres Mamlūks,” in *Actes du premier congrès d’histoire et de la civilisation du Maghreb*, Vol. 1 (Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1979), 139-41; idem, “Une institution mal connue,” 14-5; Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: The Turkish Mamlūk Sultanate (648-784/1250-1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk Sultanate (784-923/1382/1517),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2, *The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 240.

²⁷⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 101; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:313; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 61; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 16; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:442-3, 2:97-8, 123; Shāfi’ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 38; al-Nuwayrī,

News of the investiture reached Damascus days after the ceremony on 19 Rajab/19 June and local officials read the announcement at the *madrassa* of the Ayyubid al-‘Ādil. Syrian Mamluk sources describe the jubilation among the masses who thanked God for the return of the Abbasid caliph after a three and a half year absence. Mosques named al-Mustanşir in the *khuṭba*, coins in Damascus bore his name, and a large street parade celebrated the news.²⁷¹ Meanwhile in Egypt, al-Maqrīzī reports that the caliph and sultan briefly descended from the citadel into Cairo (*Miṣr*) to observe a demonstration of nautical war games including “fire ships” (*ḥarrāqa*, pl. *ḥarrā’iq*) on the Nile, while locals came out to catch a glimpse.²⁷²

The caliph remained in Cairo for several weeks as Mamluk grandees discussed plans for his triumphal return to Baghdad. On 4 Sha‘bān 659/4 July 1261, al-Mustanşir was honored at another ceremony unveiling the investiture diploma (*taqlīd*) combined with another round of robing for Mamluk officials at the Bustān al-Kabīr pavilion erected outside Cairo. Baybars emerged from a private tent in full regalia, dressed in a black turban with golden embroidery, a violet robe, medallion, and a sword hung at his side.²⁷³ Donning a yellow satin robe, Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Luqmān, the head of the chancery, ascended the *minbar* and read the investiture document which he had composed. Upon completion Baybars paraded through the streets with the document displayed overhead while a number of amirs accompanied on foot.²⁷⁴

As an interesting aside to the investiture of al-Mustanşir, the royal biographer Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir claims that Baybars, after concluding a delicate peace with al-Malik al-Mughīth ‘Umar (Ayyubid ruler of al-Karak), engaged in some subsequent diplomacy. A new complication arose with the Shahrazūriyya Kurds raiding Mamluk positions, perhaps at the behest of al-Mughīth, prompting Baybars to reconsider the peace. Hoping to discourage Baybars from sending another

Nihāya, 23:328, 30:29; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām 651-660*, 407; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:826; Ibn Duqmāq, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:451; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:296-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:111; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:53; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 381; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:1:315.

²⁷¹ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 213 (“*Surrar al-nās bi-dhalik surruran ‘aẓīman.*”); idem, *al-Mudhayyal ‘alā al-rawḍatayn: Ta’rīkh al-dawla al-Ayyūbiyya mā ba‘da Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ḥattā dawlat al-mamālīk fī ‘ahd al-Zāhir Baybars*, (Beirut, 2010), 2:162; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:451-2; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169-70; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:73.

²⁷² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:451.

²⁷³ Members of the Mamluk army carried more swords behind the sultan along with a pair of flags, arrows, a shield and other unmentioned elements of early Bahārī military flare.

²⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 101; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:313; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 61; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 16; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:443, 2:98, 124; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Ḥusn*, 38, 44; Abū al-Fidā, *Mukhtaṣar*, 3:253-4; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:30, 35; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:258; idem, *Siyār*, 23:170; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:407; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 82-3; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 20:253; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:97-8; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 232; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:825-6; Ibn Duqmāq, *Nuzhat al-anām*, 277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:452-3; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:296, 298, 308; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:111; idem, *Manhal*, 2:74-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:53, 58; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 381-2. The text of the investiture document appears in Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 102-10 and is discussed in Chapter 5.

deployment to oust him, al-Mughīth sent messengers to the caliph asking for intercession with the sultan. The caliph agreed and successfully convinced Baybars to abandon a punitive expedition. The caliph returned messengers to al-Mughīth informing him of the sultan's special consideration.²⁷⁵

Securing the Caliphate in Egypt

Baybars, although a competent commander, began his career as a slave devoid of family connections or distinguished ancestors, a serious impediment in a society connected viscerally to the Islamic past in which great stock was placed on lineage. Therefore, it is perhaps no surprise that the Mamluk sultan placed himself at the head of the project to restore the Abbasid caliphate to make his own regime "more palatable in the eyes of the *'ulamā'* and pious public,"²⁷⁶ as a modern historian puts it. After all, whose endorsement could gain him more exalted prestige in the post-caliphal Sunni world than that of the living heir of the Prophet's uncle?

Baybars's resurrection of the caliphate conforms with a conscious effort to follow Zangid, Ayyubid, and even Seljuq models of political legitimization in which caliphal suzerainty resided at the heart of the political system and rulers nominally acknowledged the reigning Abbasids in Baghdad as their overlords, frequently sought letters of recognition and proclaimed their names on coins, inscriptions, and in religious orations.²⁷⁷ Indeed Baybars may have been privy to the prior attempt of Quṭuz to offer *bay'a* to al-Ḥākim and was equally aware that Abbasid refugees had surfaced among the bedouin tribes of greater Syria and Mesopotamia. There can be no doubt about the high political premium on Abbasid investiture and the prestige their presence offered a ruler's court in the post-Mongol Islamic world. While Baybars was essentially restoring the status quo, at the outset of his rule, he remained under pressure to distinguish his regime, silence competing claims, and destroy any grounds for accusation that he had come by his power unlawfully.²⁷⁸

Nevertheless, installing an Abbasid caliph who could be persuaded to delegate all caliphal powers and prerogatives to a powerful sultan could not have stifled the criticisms of Baybars's detractors or quelled fears about his violent subduing of challengers in the region. In

²⁷⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 122-3; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:218; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:220-1, 234.

²⁷⁶ Jonathan P. Berkey, "Mamluk Religious Policy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 11.

²⁷⁷ Yaacov Lev, "Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 13.

²⁷⁸ Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 113; P. M. Holt, "The Virtuous Ruler in Thirteenth-Century Mamluk Royal Biographies," in *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1980): 31-3.

the end, the Abbasid caliph could only help reinforce any legitimacy Baybars could already secure on his own through military successes.²⁷⁹

The resonance of the caliphal office among average Muslims was part of an immutable social current which political players may have found difficult to ignore. It is admittedly difficult to demonstrate the extent that Baybars was forced to respond to the mood of his time. Having an Abbasid in his city, however, transformed it into a proper Islamic capital the way Baghdad had been, and added divine charisma and blessings (*baraka*) to his government. One anecdote preserved by al-Dhahabī and related by Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām portrays Baybars as recognizing the *spiritual* value of the caliph’s presence:

[The day after the *bay’a* ceremony] we appeared before the sultan who praised the caliph and said “From the sum of his blessings, yesterday I entered the house (*al-dār*), heading straight for a place to pray, and saw a protruding stone bench and told the slaves (*ghilmān*) to destroy it. As they set about the task, it became apparent that [the bench] concealed an underground passageway (*taḥtahā sarbun*) so they descended it and found many boxes of gold and silver from the treasures of [Ayyubid sultan] al-Malik al-Kāmil, may God be pleased with him.”²⁸⁰

Baybars himself recognized the gold as bounty directly linked to the caliph’s *baraka*. The nature of Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām’s remarks do not seem to contradict the notion that Baybars understood his act of restoring the caliphate as a pious act worthy of divine reward in the form of monetary compensation. For Baybars, finding the treasure was just one more benefit associated with the caliph’s presence in Cairo.

Reclaiming Baghdad: A Deadly Mission?

After the *bay’a* ceremony and public appearances related to the arrival of al-Mustanşir, Baybars assigned servants to the caliphal household in Sha‘bān 659/June 1261. Possibly aware of rival caliphal missions to retake Baghdad, the sultan and his amirs decided that al-Mustanşir should be outfitted with a modest army to embark on a similar expedition. Baybars assigned numerous personnel to aid the caliph’s mission including chancery officials, religious functionaries (*imāms* and muezzins), and even doctors. Baybars made the amir Sābiq al-Dīn Būzbā *atābak* over a thousand horsemen along with the eunuch Bahā’ al-Dīn Şandal al-Sharābī over another 500 horsemen, the amir Nāşir al-Dīn ibn Şayram as treasurer charged with 200

²⁷⁹ Sherman A. Jackson, “The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-A’azz and the Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamlūk Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 115, no. 1 (1995): 58-9. Jackson adds that both Baybars and al-Mustanşir were new émigrés to Cairo and it would have been difficult for one to appeal to the other’s authority.

²⁸⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:408. Also quoted in Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 150.

horsemen, Najm al-Dīn as *ustādār* over 500 horsemen, and Sayf al-Dīn Balabān al-Shamsī as *dawādār* with 500 horsemen. Baybars also armed bedouin fighters and distributed sizeable sums to cover several months' expenses. The Mamluk sultan purchased and promoted 100 mamlūks to guardsman (*jandār*) and arms bearer (*silāḥdār*) positions, equipping each with three horses and camels all to carry the caliph's belongings and equipment.²⁸¹ Perhaps believing that a Muslim ruler needed ceremonial tents (*dahālīz*) to be taken seriously, Baybars also equipped the caliph with tents of his own.²⁸²

Together Baybars and al-Mustanşir headed east towards Damascus on 19 Ramaḍān 659/17 August 1261 once the caliph's entourage and troops were flushed with cash. After praying and celebrating the festival marking the end of Ramaḍān, al-Mustanşir spent time in the sultan's tent. At a fixed moment, the Abbasid caliph adorned the Mamluk sultan in the garment of the *futuwwa* brotherhood (*libās al-futuwwa*)²⁸³ before a select group of unnamed dignitaries.²⁸⁴

The sons of the recently deceased governor of Mosul, Badr al-Dīn al-Lu'lu' (d. 657/1259) also accompanied the caliph's expedition.²⁸⁵ Finding life difficult as Mongol vassals

²⁸¹ Mamluk sources vary on the numbers of troops and names of specific officers involved. See: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 110-1; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:315-6; Ḥasan al-'Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 151; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 67; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 47; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 17; Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 2-3 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:449, 2:104; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn*, 44-5; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:253; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:328-9, 30:36; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:79-80; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:259; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:408; idem, *Siyār*, 23:169; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 83-4; al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn*, 20:253-5; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 182-4; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260, 275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:457-9; idem, *Durar al-'uqud*, 2:207; idem, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 90; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 10; al-'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 1:294, 309-11; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:114; idem, *Manhal*, 2:75; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:238; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:202. Some sources claim the caliph himself requested Baybars to arm him for the expedition, see: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn*, 2:58. Amitai-Preiss notes the impossibility of knowing if Baybars truly intended to send such a large force, while Heidemann observed that many of the listed personnel were not among Baybars's elite forces. See: Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 6-63; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 102-4.

²⁸² Albrecht Fuess, "Between *dihlīz* and *dār al-'adl*: Forms of Outdoor and Indoor Royal Representation at the Mamluk Court in Egypt," in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London: Routledge, 2011), 151.

²⁸³ This was most likely a special pair of trousers known as *sarāwīl*.

²⁸⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *A'lāq*, 3, 208-9; Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 111; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:316; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 18; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:450, 2:107; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn*, 45; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:36; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:80-1; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:252; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:408; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 84-5; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 182; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:459; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:74, 76; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:238; al-Suyūfī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:203. According to Mamluk sources, Baybars allocated over one million dinars for the caliph's mission.

²⁸⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 112; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:317; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 66; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 47; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 17; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:329-30; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 84; al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn*, 20:255; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 1:309; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:115. On the

the two brothers Rukn al-Dīn Ismāʿīl of Mosul and Sayf al-Dīn Ishāq of the Jazīra, in Shaʿbān 659/July 1261 petitioned the sultan of Egypt to aid them.²⁸⁶ Baybars refused the request of the Luʿluʾid princes for an army of their own to reclaim their ancestral homelands from the Mongols, but allowed them to join al-Mustanşir on his quest.²⁸⁷

On 6 Shawwāl 659/3 September 1261, the sultan and the caliph met the Syrian army after arriving at al-Kuswa. Damascene crowds, excited to welcome the pair, arrived to greet the Egyptian army when it arrived in the city on 10 Dhū al-Qaʿda 659/6 October 1261.²⁸⁸ The sultan lodged at the Damascus citadel while al-Mustanşir camped near the *madrassa* and tomb complex of the Ayyubid sultan al-Nāşir Yūsuf outside the city at the Jabal al-Sālihiyya and later rejoined the Mamluk sultan for public prayers at the Umayyad mosque.²⁸⁹ Before he sent the caliph to retake Baghdad, Baybars drastically scaled down the accompanying forces and left al-Mustanşir with a paltry 300 men.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the Mamluk sultan took the precaution of ordering the amirs Sayf al-Dīn al-Rashīdī, Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Rūmī, and Aydaḳīn Bunduqdār to ride ahead to the Euphrates by way of Aleppo (with orders to seize the city from Āqqūsh al-Barlī). They were then to remain on standby and await any request from al-Mustanşir for assistance in Iraq if he required it.²⁹¹

career of Badr al-Dīn Luʿluʾ, see: Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaşar*, 3:237-8; Douglas Patton, *Badr al-Dīn Luʿluʾ: Atabeg of Mosul, 1211-1259* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

²⁸⁶ On the imprisonment of ʿAlī ibn Badr al-Dīn Luʿluʾ, see: Patton, *Atabeg of Mosul*, 73.

²⁸⁷ To that end the Mamluk sultan (by virtue of his new caliphal authority) furnished the Luʿluʾids with investiture documents (as well as cash and supplies) recognizing their suzerainty over their former lands. See: Ibn Shaddād, *Aʿlāq*, 3:209; Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Zubda*, 65-6; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 42; idem, *Mukhtār al-akḥbār*, 17-9; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:452, 2:106, 124; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:329-30; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:81; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:170; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 48:408; Ibn Khaldūn, *Taʾrīkh*, 5:826; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:460-1; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:311, 314-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:417-20; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 382. See also: Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 57; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 145.

²⁸⁸ Some Mamluk sources set the date for the arrival in Damascus on 7 Dhū al-Ḥijja/2 November 1261: al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:169; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:311 (quoting Ibn Kathīr); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:74; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:58.

²⁸⁹ Notables such as the caliph or members of the religious establishment were often given residence quarters in *madrassas*. See: Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 91 note 2.

²⁹⁰ En route to Syria Baybars learned that the amir Sanjar al-Ḥalabī had been forced to abandon Aleppo to Āqqūsh al-Barlī, which may have prompted the Mamluk sultan to redistribute the forces allocated for the caliph's expedition. See: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:462; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 145.

²⁹¹ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 213-4; Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 111-2; Ibn Wāşil, *Mufarrij*, 6:316-7; Ibn al-Şuqāʿī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 3 (French); Baybars al-Manşūrī, *Tuḥfa*, 48; idem, *Zubda*, 66-7; idem, *Mukhtār al-akḥbār*, 18-9; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:452; 2:106-7; Şāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Ḥusn*, 45; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaşar*, 3:253-4; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat*, 23:330, 30:37; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:81; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:170-1; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 48:76, 409; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:459-60, 462; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:310-1; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:76; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:238.

The caliph left for Iraq joined by Baybars's forces and the Lu'lu'id princes on 23 Dhū al-Qa'da/19 October by way of al-Buriyya.²⁹² The company landed near the town of al-Raḥba and camped for three days near the tomb of the fourth caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (35-40/656-61). Changes to the expedition took place during the respite when al-Mustanṣir's forces encountered the Āl Faḍl bedouin under the chieftain 'Alī ibn Ḥadītha who appended 400 horsemen to the cause. Despite pleading from the caliph, the Lu'lu'ids abandoned the mission to pursue their own interests in Iraq, taking roughly sixty mamlūks and several camels with them. However, the amir 'Izz al-Dīn Aydaḳīn from Ḥamā joined the caliph's expedition along with another thirty horsemen at roughly the same time.²⁹³

After three days, al-Mustanṣir continued south towards the town of 'Āna and encountered the forces of the rival caliph al-Ḥākim, sent by the amir Āqqūsh al-Barlī, advancing on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. The residents of 'Āna, allegedly aware of al-Mustanṣir's investiture by Baybars in Egypt, denied al-Ḥākim allegiance and access to the town. The townspeople had vowed to open the gates *only* for al-Mustanṣir, "the true caliph," arriving from the west. 'Āna surrendered to al-Mustanṣir who presented it as an *iqṭā'* to the amir Nāṣir al-Dīn Aghlamish.²⁹⁴

The caliph rode on to al-Ḥadītha, whose inhabitants opened the gates and declared their willingness to submit to the Commander of the Faithful. Al-Mustanṣir took the town as his own property. The majority of al-Ḥākim's nearly 700 Turkmen riders acknowledged al-Mustanṣir as the more powerful candidate, and abandoned the Aleppan caliph in favor of his Cairene rival. Al-Mustanṣir encouraged al-Ḥākim, who had little recourse but to set aside his claim, to unite in the name of the Banī 'Abbās (through *bay'a*) and offered him shared space in his vestibule or pavilion tent (*dihlīz*).²⁹⁵

²⁹² Abū Shāma, *Tarājīm*, 214; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:452, 2:163; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:82; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:408; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 184-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:462; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:76.

²⁹³ Ibn Shaddād, *A'lāq*, 3:208-9; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Tuhfa*, 48; Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 2 (Arabic), 3 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:454, 2:108-9; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:82; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:76; idem, *Siyār*, 23:171; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:235; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:462; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 184-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:115; idem, *Manhal*, 2:76; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:239. See also: Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 57.

²⁹⁴ Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 3 (Arabic), 3 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:455, 2:110; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:171; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām 651-660*, 409; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 87; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:115-6; idem, *Manhal*, 2:77; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 383. Ibn al-Dawādārī inserts dialogue: "We learned that the sultan of Egypt had given *bay'a* to a caliph whose arrival is imminent. We shall not submit to any but him." See: *Kanz al-durar*, 8:82.

²⁹⁵ Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, *Tālī*, 3 (Arabic), 3 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:454-5, 2:109-10; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:82; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:253; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 48:76, 409; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 87; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:462-3; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:116-7; idem, *Manhal*, 2:77; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 382. Possible reasons for al-Ḥākim's "surrender" range from Ibn al-

Bolstered by the forces of al-Ḥākim, al-Mustanṣir wrote to Baybars of initial progress and the reclamation of the Iraqi towns ‘Āna and al-Ḥadītha.²⁹⁶ After departing the latter, al-Mustanṣir’s army alighted at a river bank before continuing on to Hīt. News of the caliph’s arrival and modest triumphs quickly reached Qarābughā the Mongol commander in Iraq (*muqaddam ‘askar al-ṭatar bi-al-‘Irāq*) who dispatched an army of his own to confront the caliphal forces. Qarābughā’s army entered al-Anbār with 5,000 Mongols who plundered and massacred the population, while the military governor (*shihna*) of Baghdad ‘Alī Bahādur al-Khawarazmī brought up the remainder of the Mongol army from the rear.²⁹⁷ ‘Alī Bahādur entrusted his son to continue on to Hīt to warn the Mongols of al-Mustanṣir’s movements by signaling with the opposite river bank set ablaze at the caliph’s approach.²⁹⁸

As al-Mustanṣir advanced westward he encountered resistance when the inhabitants of Hīt closed the city gates in fear of impending violence. Laying siege to the town, the caliph’s forces overwhelmed it on 29 Dhū al-Ḥijja 659/24 November 1261 and plundered the local non-Muslim population. Further south the caliph camped at al-Dūr while a vanguard continued on in advance. Al-Mustanṣir spent the night of 3 Muḥarram 660/28 November 1261 encamped across the Euphrates from Qarābughā’s Mongols in al-Anbār on the western bank of the river. At night, when Qarābughā noticed the caliph’s vanguard he ordered his troops to cross the river and hostilities ensued the following morning.²⁹⁹ Before setting out, however, the Mongol commander allegedly ordered Muslim fighters in his ranks to hold back from the fight, concerned that they might betray the Mongols in favor of their Muslim caliph.³⁰⁰

Al-Mustanṣir or his amirs ordered the fighters into a classic battle formation with twelve squadrons of bedouin on the right flank, Turkmen cavalry fighters on the left, and the caliph and the mamlūks holding the center. Although present in the wings, the bedouin and Turkmen

Bannā’s claim that al-Mustanṣir had been cunning and Abū Shāma’s suggestion that al-Mustanṣir was the more senior of the two. See: *Tarājim*, 215.

²⁹⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 112; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 45-6; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:254; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:330, 30:37; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:171; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 185; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:463; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:203. Ibn Wāṣil claimed the Mamluk sultan responded and advised the caliph to proceed with caution. See: *Mufarrij*, 6:317-8.

²⁹⁷ On the early Mongol administration of Baghdad with reference to the roles played by Qarābughā and ‘Alī Bahādur al-Khawarazmī, see: Hend Gilli-Elewy, “The Mongol Court in Baghdad: The Juwaynī Brothers between Local Court and Central Court,” in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London: Routledge, 2011), 169-72.

²⁹⁸ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 68; Ibn al-Ṣuqā‘ī, *Tālī*, 3 (Arabic), 3 (French); al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:455, 2:110; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 46; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:255; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:83; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:171; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:409; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 87-8; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 185; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:116; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:239.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:77; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:1:318.

³⁰⁰ Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 58.

deployments remained detached from the action. The “Abbasid” army drove back Bahādur ‘Alī’s forces, but once the Mongols launched a feigned retreat the caliph’s forces followed them irresistibly into an ambush. The bedouin and Turkmen flanks fled and left al-Mustansir’s central fighters exposed to a subsequent encirclement and annihilation.³⁰¹

The precise fate of al-Mustansir eluded contemporary writers and different speculative conclusions appear in the sources.³⁰² Al-Ḥākim, a shrewd politico not above suspicion for betraying his ally at a crucial moment, together with the bedouin and Turkmen survived to fight another day and headed towards al-Raḥba and the protection of ‘Īsā ibn Muḥannā, who contacted Baybars about the surviving Abbasid.³⁰³ The party continued to the Damascus citadel on 22 Ṣafar 660/16 January 1262 and reached the outskirts of Cairo by late Rabī‘ I 660/February 1262. Joined by his three Baghdadian companions and a small band of survivors, al-Ḥākim journeyed toward safety and the newly vacant Cairo caliphate that awaited him.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 215; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 68; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 19; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:456, 486, 500, 2:111; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 46; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:330, 30:37; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:255; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:83; al-Dhahabī, *‘Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:253; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:409; idem, *Siyār*, 23:171; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:265; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 89; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 185; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260, 275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:467; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:208; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:328; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:117; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:239; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382.

³⁰² Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:457; al-Dhahabī, *Siyār*, 23:171; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:255-6; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 90; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 185; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahiyya*, 10:1; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:328; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:239; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:58; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:319; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:203. Ibn al-Ṣuqā‘ī relates a legend attributed to a Damascene weaver who claimed to be a veteran of the battle. According to the account, al-Mustansir, left with only four hundred horsemen, and upon being cowed by the “superiority” of the 6,000 Mongols who had come to meet them, fell from his horse during the battle and played dead, hiding beneath a corpse and waiting until dark when all the enemies had dispersed. See: *Tālī*, 3 (Arabic), 3-4 (French). Ibn al-Dawādārī discusses the varying theories that the caliph disappeared, fell in battle, or that his head was paraded through the streets of Baghdad by the victorious Mongols. See: *Kanz al-durar*, 8:84. Ibn Kathīr reports that al-Mustansir was killed on 3 Muḥarram 660/28 November 1261 (*Bidāya*, 13:232, 235), while al-Maqrīzī suggested the caliph may only have been wounded and died later in bedouin care. See: *Sulūk*, 1:2:463; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:783; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:207-8.

³⁰³ Al-Dhahabī, *‘Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:253; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:125. Heidemann suggested that al-Ḥākim may have deliberately fled at the crucial moment to ensure the death of his rival and secure his own position as Abbasid caliph. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 156-6; Amitai-Preiss, “Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” 491.

³⁰⁴ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 216; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:456, 483, 486, 2:111, 153; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:83; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:76; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 89; al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 186; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:468; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:208; idem, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 90; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:329, 347-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:77-8; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:240; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:59; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 383; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:204. It was during this “second vacancy” that the qadi Khidr al-Kurdī announced his ambitions for a new Abbasid caliphate and was subsequently hanged by authorities. Abū Shāma and other historians reported that after the death of al-Mustansir, no caliph was named on the coinage in 660/1261-2, though some mosque orators continued to name the late Commander of the Faithful in the *khutba* until the investiture of al-Ḥākim in 661/1262. See: Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 105; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:345. For a list of survivors, see: Ibn al-Ṣuqā‘ī, *Tālī*, 3 (Arabic), 3 (French).

The decision by Baybars to dispatch the Abbasid caliph with limited resources puzzled medieval scholars and continues to confuse their modern counterparts. However, through the eyes of the Mamluk elite, the situation may have appeared ripe for expansion into an area of dubious Mongol control.³⁰⁵ For Baybars and his amirs to conclude that the time was right to reclaim Baghdad is thus not inconceivable in the years before Ilkhanid consolidation of Mesopotamia and Persia.³⁰⁶

Some historians believed Baybars deliberately intended to dispose of the Abbasid caliph over fear of his growing influence and popularity in the sultan's domains.³⁰⁷ Later Mamluk sources support this idea in their claims that a third party, perhaps one of the Lu'lu'id princes, poisoned Baybars against the caliph which culminated in the Mamluk sultan sending al-Mustanşir on a suicide mission.³⁰⁸ This assumption was absorbed by some modern scholars who believed Baybars wanted to clear the stage of any potential political rivals.³⁰⁹ However, Reuven Amitai-Preiss has nicely summarized several flaws in this theory:

First, it seems unlikely that Baybars would have contemplated at this early stage dispatching such a large force, which would have represented a sizeable chunk of the troops at his disposal, especially as he was still in the first stages of organizing his army. Second, it is difficult to see what exactly worried Baybars about al-Mustanşir, who had given the Sultan complete power to rule in his name. Third, Baybars subsequently showed himself capable of keeping a Caliph (al-Ḥākim) in the background. Fourth, even taking Baybars's known cynicism and sense of *Realpolitik* into account, it is still hard to believe that he would deliberately send the Caliph on a suicide mission. Finally, one wonders how al-Mustanşir would agree to embark on such an ill-fated campaign.³¹⁰

Baybars's plans for Iraq after the expedition remain unclear. In the investiture document, the caliph legitimized any future holdings Baybars might secure from unbelievers which surely

³⁰⁵ In the years immediately following the fall of Baghdad, the Mongols left Iraq thinly guarded. Perhaps more concerned by the threat of the Golden Horde, Hülāgū left only a token military force in Iraq after the Mongol defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt in spring 659/1261. The main Mongol army, likely stationed to the northeast in Azerbaijan, tended to only garrison the cities, which would partially explain the inferior fighting force defeated by the Mamluks at 'Ayn Jālūt. See: P. M. Holt, "Some Observations on the 'Abbāsid Caliphate of Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 502; Patton, *Atabeg of Mosul*, 75; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 149-50; Amitai-Preiss, "Fall and Rise of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate," 491; Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 339-41; Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 122. On the size of the Mongol army at 'Ayn Jālūt, see: Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "'Ayn Jālūt Revisited," *Tārīḥ* 2 (1992): 120-9.

³⁰⁶ Holt, "Some Observations," 502.

³⁰⁷ Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 265; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 94; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 115; Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 43.

³⁰⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:462. See also: Holt, "Some Observations," 501-2; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 146-9; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 59.

³⁰⁹ Arnold, *Caliphate*, 94; Khuwayṭir, *Baibars the First*, 34-6; Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 114-6.

³¹⁰ Amitai-Preiss, *Mamluks and Mongols*, 59.

included the re-conquest of Iraq.³¹¹ Heidemann saw the expedition as more of an elongated raid, believing that Baybars was not interested in *direct* control of Baghdad otherwise he would have led the army himself.³¹² Holt acknowledges that the Mamluk-Mongol border after ‘Ayn Jālūt was by no means stable and Baybars was in search of client rulers to place in power to his east such as al-Mustansir who already had inroads among the bedouin, and the sons of Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu’ who were anxious to return to their ancestral homelands.³¹³ Amitai-Preiss accepts that the recovery of Baghdad was truly the aim of the conquest since that had been its stated purpose.³¹⁴

The Mongol annihilation of the Baghdad caliphate in 656/1258 was not unexpected: the Mongols could hardly tolerate a rival institution claiming universal sovereignty based on religion.³¹⁵ As some scholars have noted, Baybars’s choice to send the caliph into Mongol territory reflected a desire to present a fully-developed Mamluk alternative to the Mongol or Chinggisid ideology.³¹⁶ For the Mongols, the resurrection of the Abbasid caliphate was manifest proof that the Mamluks meant to become “de facto leaders of the Muslim world,”³¹⁷ including the part occupied by the invaders. Moreover, the restored Islamic caliphate may also have been a riposte to the sacred elements of Mongol ideology, thereby casting the Mamluks as “defenders of Islam, Muslims and the caliphate,” and polar opposites to the Mongols of Hülägü’s conquest.³¹⁸ Later Mamluk claims that the caliph was still, in theory, the supreme authority in lands he no longer ruled directly must have offended Mongol ruling pretensions.³¹⁹

It is noteworthy that the Mamluks set the caliph at the head of the army, in direct opposition to the Mongols’ practice of making a Chinggisid lead their forces.³²⁰ We might suggest that at least in this instance, caliphal authority became the antithesis of Chinggisid charisma. Indeed, the Mongols would have interpreted the expedition of the Abbasid caliph as a

³¹¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 104.

³¹² Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 148-50.

³¹³ Holt, “Some Observations,” 502.

³¹⁴ Amitai-Preiss, “Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” 491.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 488.

³¹⁶ In several places, Heidemann covers competing Mongol and Mamluk ideologies, authority, and legitimate power: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 36-8, 43-4, 55-61, 166, 195-7. See also the useful discussion in: Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 6-26; Nasser Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 163.

³¹⁷ Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War Against the Mamluks,” in *Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 61-2.

³¹⁸ Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chingis Khan’s Empire,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 23-8; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reign of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 92, 95.

³¹⁹ Amitai-Preiss, “Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” 488.

³²⁰ There is also the similar notion of alleged Mongol reluctance to shed the “royal” blood of the caliph in 1258, just as it was unacceptable to shed the blood of a Chinggisid.

potent provocation: he was a man of power whom they had to respect, as well as a force applying a gravitational attraction upon Muslims in the Mongol army.

Al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh in Mamluk Cairo (660-701/1261-1302)

By the time Baybars welcomed him to Cairo on 17 Rabī‘ II 660/11 March 1262, al-Ḥākim, though still most likely a teenager, had already enjoyed a storied political and military career.³²¹ Mamluk sources claim al-Ḥākim, his son, and three traveling companions were welcomed amid fanfare by Baybars, though in truth he arrived in Cairo as excitement for the recently martyred caliph al-Mustanşir began to wane.³²² Baybars was no longer preoccupied with caliphal investiture, and the name of al-Mustanşir, whose caliphate had scarcely lasted six months, may already have been removed from coinage.³²³ Prior to his arrival, al-Ḥākim had been eager to reach Cairo, aware that Baybars possessed resources and influence far outweighing those of ‘Īsā ibn Muhannā and Āqqūsh al-Barlī.³²⁴ Upon arrival the Mamluk sultan immediately assigned some expense money for al-Ḥākim, now in his thirties, and sequestered him in the tower of the citadel, likely a shock to the former caliph of Aleppo who had enjoyed some independence and political power alongside his earlier patrons. Al-Ḥākim spent the rest of 660/1262 in the tower without receiving a formal pledge from Baybars.³²⁵

It was in dealing with the fallout from Mongol internecine struggles that the caliphate renewed its political importance for Baybars. Harmony among the descendants of Chinggis Khān

³²¹ According to Ibn Wāṣil, al-Ḥākim reached Cairo at the end of 659/1261. See: *Mufarrij*, 6:350. See also: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:232; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 382-3. Some sources put the caliph’s age at about 15. See: Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 151.

³²² Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 221; Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:483-4, 530; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331, 30:79; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:86; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 48:80; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 92; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:266; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:233-4; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:468; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:783; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 11; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 383. The later historian al-Qaramānī claims they arrived on 16 Ṣafar 660/10 January 1262. See: *Akhhbār al-duwal*, 2:204. There appears to be no mention of the caliph in 661/1262-3 although the name of al-Mustanşir was still stamped on coins briefly after the failed Baghdad campaign. See: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 159, 200.

³²³ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:500; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59. Heidemann suggests that the ultimate aim of Baybars was to rid himself of the caliphate. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 156-7, 159, 177-9.

³²⁴ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 105-7.

³²⁵ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:350; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:484, 2:153; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:86; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 92; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 20:266; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 186; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:468; al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1:347; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:79; idem, *Mawrid al-latāfa*, 1:240-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 383. Holt suggested that it was al-Ḥākim’s political influence and bedouin support that made Baybars cautious about investing him right away. See: Holt, “Some Observations,” 502-3; Amitai-Preiss, “Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” 491. According to Ibn al-Wardī, the caliph, after having arrived the previous year, attended public councils with Baybars in Cairo in Dhū al-Ḥijja 660/October 1262. See: *Ta’rīkh*, 2:306.

disintegrated after the death of the Great Khān Möngkä in 657/1259.³²⁶ Subsequent civil war between the brothers Ariq Buqa and Qubilai ended in victory for the latter who had been supported by Hülägü. Berke, the Khān of the Golden Horde since 655/1257, had supported the losing side and was left without allies in a bitter rivalry with his cousin Hülägü. Berke's isolation among the Mongols was compounded, moreover, by his early conversion to Islam in the 650/1250s. This left him anxious to form an alliance with the Mamluks.³²⁷ Baybars reciprocated Berke's interest, due in part, to his concerns about the unfriendly power emerging in the east.

By reaching out to Berke in late 660/1262, Baybars stood to make strategic gains against their common Ilkhanid enemy as well as to secure a safe route to the valuable Qipchaq steppe (northern Black Sea steppes), the source of the slaves that perpetuated the Mamluk system and which fell within Golden Horde territory.³²⁸ It was surely no accident that the eventual release and caliphal investiture of al-Ḥākim in Dhū al-Ḥijja 660/October 1262 coincided with the visit of a Golden Horde embassy to Cairo. Baybars permitted the caliph to participate in the festivities celebrating the arrival of the embassy, which culminated in al-Ḥākim's caliphal *bay'a* ceremony. On 2 Muḥarram 661/16 November 1262, Baybars prepared a gathering for his citadel elite and the visiting Golden Horde delegates to observe the allegiance ceremony for the new caliph. Al-Ḥākim solemnly rode into the citadel, dismounted, and sat beside Baybars. As had been the practice with al-Mustanṣir, Mamluk officials read a genealogical record linking the caliph to the Abbasid family to the congregation. Baybars then offered his pledge to the caliph and renewed the promises he had made to al-Mustanṣir. It was then al-Ḥākim's turn to approach the sultan and confer authority on him over the affairs of the lands and people before naming the Mamluk sultan his associate in establishing justice. The notables and ambassadors then offered *bay'a* to the new Abbasid caliph, again according to rank.³²⁹

³²⁶ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 55-6.

³²⁷ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 220; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 82-4; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:161-2; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:234; Devin Deweese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 83-6. For a general discussion of the historical background, see: Peter Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal* 22, (1978): 186-244; David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 112-74.

³²⁸ For an overview of the Mamluk slave system, see: Linda S. Northrup, "Military Slavery in the Islamic and Mamluk Context," in *Unfreie Arbeit: Ökonomische und kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven*, Sklaverei-Knechtschaft-Zwangsarbeit, Band 3, ed. M. Erdem Kabadayi and Tobias Reichardt (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2007), 115-31.

³²⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawd*, 141-2; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:351; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 78; idem, *Tuhfa*, 51; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:530, 2:187; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn*, 51-2; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:263; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 49:5-6; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 105; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 20:287; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:331, 30:79; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:94; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:267; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:237-8; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:827-8, 947; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 186-7; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:468, 477; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:783; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:208; idem, *Dhahab al-*

Baybars was swift to emphasize the caliph's Islamic importance by making al-Ḥākim accessible to the Golden Horde ambassadors (many of whom were new converts to the faith) and presenting him as a central figure of religion under Mamluk protection. Shortly after the ceremony, Baybars brought the caliph to review the names of ambassadors selected to head a return embassy to Golden Horde territory, which al-Ḥākim confirmed before the assembly adjourned. The name of the caliph was subsequently mentioned on the *minbars* of Egypt before that of Baybars, while Syrian mosques prayed for the caliph shortly thereafter.³³⁰

The next day, Mamluk notables and Golden Horde delegates attended al-Ḥākim's first Friday sermon and prayer. Emphasizing the importance of the imamate and the act of holy war, Baybars had highlights of the *khutba* recapitulated in a message to Berke which also included the full text of the caliph's remarks and a genealogy linking him to the Prophet. The embassy was dispatched north to Berke later in Muḥarram 661/November 1262.³³¹

Berke sent a return embassy which arrived in Cairo on 11 Rajab 661/21 May 1263.³³² The Golden Horde delegates presented their master's formal request for support against Hülāgū together with his willingness to participate with the Mamluks in a two-front war against him.³³³ The Golden Horde ambassadors were again treated to a special audience with the caliph as well as polo matches in his honor. To further strengthen Cairo's link with the Golden Horde, al-Ḥākim

masbūk, 90 (8 Muḥarram 661/22 November 1262); al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:329, 345-9; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:79 (8 Muḥarram); idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:240-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 383. See also: Holt, "Some Observations," 503; Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 97; Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks: XIIIe - XVIe siècle; une expérience du pouvoir dans l'Islam médiéval* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014), 36-7.

³³⁰ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 142; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:351; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 78; Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Ḥusn*, 52; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 105; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 187; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:783; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:208-9; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:349; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:79-80; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:241; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 383. Friday sermons named al-Ḥākim in Syria on 16 Muḥarram 661/30 November 1262: Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 221; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:479; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:346; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:61. According to al-Yūnīnī, the mosque of Damascus, as well as other places of worship, prayed for the caliph on 10 Jumādā II 661/21 April 1263. See: *Dhayl*, 1:530, 2:187-8. For a discussion of the *minbar* itself as a symbol of power during the Mamluk period, see Miriam Kühn, "Stars, they come and go, [...] and all you see is glory" - *minbars* as Emblems of Political Power in Intra-Mamlūk Strife" in *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 192-8.

³³¹ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 145; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:348, 351; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:188-90; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 78-80; Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Ḥusn*, 51-2; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331, 30:105; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 49:6; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:477-80; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784; Abū Ḥamid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahiyya*, 11; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 1:349-53; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:59; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 383; Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 97. For a discussion of this *khutba*, see Chapter 5 below. See also: Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 259-62.

³³² This particular embassy was a response to a much earlier delegation sent by Baybars almost a year earlier.

³³³ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 171-2; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 81-3; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:533-4; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:82-4, 87.

was ordered to name both Baybars and Berke in a *khuṭba* attended by Berke's ambassadors on Saturday 28 Sha'bān 661/7 July 1263.³³⁴ After leading prayers in the citadel, the caliph joined Baybars for a religious counseling session for Berke's ambassadors.³³⁵

On 3 Ramaḍān 661/11 July 1263, during a late night ceremony, the Mamluk sultan capitalized on his earlier initiation into the *futuwwa* brotherhood by al-Mustanṣir. Before the assembly, Baybars inquired as to whether al-Ḥākim had been inducted into the *futuwwa* by any of his family members.³³⁶ After confirming the negative, the caliph, no doubt scripted by the Mamluk sultan and his advisors, expressed his wish to revive the *futuwwa* and donned its special garb.³³⁷ The next night, Golden Horde ambassadors attended the citadel and the Abbasid caliph invested them all into the *futuwwa* and distributed the appropriate livery. Baybars carefully displayed his own ties to the brotherhood and recited the *silsila* which linked them all to the caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (575-622/1180-1225), and ultimately to prominent companions of the Prophet, including Salmān al-Fārisī (d. after 32/652-3) and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661).³³⁸ *Futuwwa* initiation and the earlier *bay'a* to the caliph of Cairo thus linked Berke's ambassadors to two institutions of Islamic civilization presented with keen importance.³³⁹ Presumably, the ambassadors were to return home, brief Berke on their collective experience in a true Islamic capital, and perhaps even initiate their sovereign to better cement his Islamic union with Baybars. In a parting address that underscored the necessity of *jihād* while commending Baybars for his service to Islam, the caliph called upon Berke himself to join the war effort and advised his ambassadors to praise Baybars to their master.³⁴⁰

³³⁴ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:191; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331. According to al-Suyūṭī, Mamluk authorities permitted the caliph to deliver the Friday sermon with some regularity in the early months of his caliphate. See: *Husn*, 2:61.

³³⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 148; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 84; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:191.

³³⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir traced the *futuwwa* from the caliph al-Nāṣir all the way to Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī, Salmān al-Fārisī, and finally 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. See: *Rawḍ*, 146-7; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:190-1; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:353.

³³⁷ For al-Mustanṣir's induction of Baybars, see: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 111. For Baybars's induction of al-Ḥākim, see: *Rawḍ* 145-6. See also: Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:356; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:190; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 53-4; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:353.

³³⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 147; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:356-7; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:190-1; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 54; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:353. See also: Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 99. On the links between al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh and the *futuwwa* in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century, see: Angelika Hartmann, *An-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1180-1225): Politik, Religion, Kultur in der späten 'Abbāsidenzeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 30-4, 92-108.

³³⁹ See below, p. 500-1.

³⁴⁰ Baybars sent an embassy of his own in response which left Cairo on 17 Ramaḍān 661/25 July 1263. One of the envoys was 'Imād al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahīm al-Hāshimī al-'Abbāsī, a member of the Abbasid family. See: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 173-4; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 6:357; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:537. See also: Amitai-Preiss, "Fall and Rise of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate," 492.

Once the alliance of Baybars and Berke had solidified, al-Ḥākim was gradually withdrawn from the political foreground. The caliph's name had been struck on Mamluk coins, but was later removed in a "conspicuous break from medieval Middle Eastern coinage protocol."³⁴¹ In Shawwāl 662/July-August 1264 Baybars also began to demonstrate interest in establishing his own dynasty rather than continue to promote Abbasid prestige by naming his son Baraka (Berke) Khān as heir apparent in a special ceremony that did not involve caliphal participation.³⁴² The caliph also failed to provide any ceremonial role at the prince's circumcision at the citadel.³⁴³

In Dhū al-Qa'da 662/August-September 1264 another Golden Horde embassy arrived in Cairo to deliver a letter thanking Baybars for his second restoration of the caliphate in as many years and agreeing to combine forces against Hülāgū to achieve, among other things, Baghdad's return to the abode of Islam.³⁴⁴ Cooperation between the Mamluks and Golden Horde was cultivated largely through Islamic institutions and allusions.³⁴⁵ The threat of a two-front war may have checked Hülāgū's ambitions, but in the end, a coordinated attack against the Ilkhanids became difficult due to the lengthy process of exchanging embassies.³⁴⁶

Early Years of Confinement

Shortly after his *bay'a* ceremony, Mamluk authorities permitted al-Ḥākim to receive visitors and travel among the civilian population on horseback, but perhaps wishing to separate the caliph from ambitious rival amirs, Baybars increased security around him.³⁴⁷ On 24 Dhū al-Ḥijja 663/7 October 1265, Baybars had the amir Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Rūmī arrested on suspicions related to unauthorized meetings with al-Ḥākim.³⁴⁸ Henceforth the sultan imposed a

³⁴¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:61; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 157, 174-5.

³⁴² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 123, 203-4; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 89-90; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:100-1; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:377-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 384.

³⁴³ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 209, 218. On the erosion of the caliph's immediate importance to Mamluk legitimacy after this period, see: Holt, "Some Observations," 503-4; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 173; Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 100.

³⁴⁴ For details of the embassy's arrival: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ* 214-8; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:105.

³⁴⁵ Berke Khan, of course, was Mongol nobility from the line of Chinggis Khān whereas Baybars had been a former slave of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb.

³⁴⁶ Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 51.

³⁴⁷ Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 55; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261. The caliph may also have been attempting to play politics by pitting the '*ulamā'*' against the sultan. It is perhaps no coincidence that the caliph was placed under house arrest the same year that Baybars created four chief qadi positions. See: Jean-Claude Garcin, "Récit d'une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars" in *L'Orient au cœur en l'honneur d'André Miquel*, ed. F. Sanagustin (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001), 252-3.

³⁴⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:540; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784. Earlier the same year in Cairo, a raucous banquet had precipitated treasonous remarks, which, after learning of them, Baybars banned private meetings for many of his amirs and military personnel. See: Clifford, *State Formation*, 97.

ban on state and military personnel visiting the Abbasid residence and restricted the caliph's movements, commencing a period of confinement that lasted nearly three decades.³⁴⁹ With little to report during the years of the caliph's forced retirement, most chroniclers shift their attention to the career of Baybars. This has led modern scholars to conclude that the caliph lost all practical importance in subsequent years.³⁵⁰ Nevertheless, some details of the caliph's life in seclusion are known to us.

Baybars closely monitored the caliph and stationed a *jandār* guardsman outside his door for two years.³⁵¹ In a time rife with sedition, failed coups, and talk of overthrowing the sultan, al-Suyūṭī later rationalized Baybars's containment of the caliph as an attempt to preserve public order. The Mamluk sultan seemed to view the scholarly class as less of a liability and granted several of them access to the Commander of the Faithful. The Damascene Shāfi'ī scholar Sharaf al-Dīn al-Maḳdisī was assigned as al-Ḥākim's secretary (*kātib darj*) and subsequently expected to tutor the caliph in Islamic jurisprudence, sciences, and penmanship. Al-Maḳdisī was joined by Ibn al-Khabbāz, who instructed the caliph in calligraphy.³⁵² Eventually, to the satisfaction of his tutors, al-Ḥākim received formal authority, as confirmed in an *ijāza*, to issue official letters and went on to prepare some forty documents.³⁵³ Despite newly acquired academic and bureaucratic prowess, Baybars excluded the caliph from state meetings for the remainder of his sultanate.³⁵⁴

More or less imprisoned in the citadel, al-Ḥākim received encouragement to perpetuate his honorable clan. Baybars gifted the caliph with a slave woman named Khātūn with whom al-Ḥākim fathered several children.³⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that unlike Seljuq sultans such as Ṭughrīl Beg, who often forced marriage relationships upon the Abbasid family,³⁵⁶ Baybars was uninterested in acquiring political capital through any such marriages with any of the daughters of

³⁴⁹ Shāfi'ī ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 55; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331; al-Dhahabī, *'Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:273; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 49:22; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:310; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261, 275; al-Maḳrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:540; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:209; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:61; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 384. According to al-Suyūṭī, Baybars began his suppression of the caliph in Ramaḍān 663/June 1265.

³⁵⁰ Garcin, "Histoire," 54; Holt, "Some Observations," 503-4; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 179.

³⁵¹ A *jandār* (or *jamdār*) was a senior soldier or member of the royal guard.

³⁵² Shāfi'ī ibn 'Alī, *Husn*, 55; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:61; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 480. On Ibn al-Khabbāz, see: al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām, ḥawādith wa-wafayāt, 701-746 H*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 2004) (hereafter cited as volume 53), 16, 44-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:383-3.

³⁵³ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318.

³⁵⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 384; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 178-9.

³⁵⁵ On use of the term "Khātūn" or "Khātūn" see: Aḥmad 'Abd ar-Raziq, *La femme au temps des Mamelouks en Égypte* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1973), 96-7; Ḥasan Al-Bāshā, *al-Alqāb al-Islāmīyya fī al-ta'rīkh wa-al-wathā'iq wa-al-athār* (Cairo, 1978), 264-6.

³⁵⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 335-6. See also: George Makdisi, "The Marriage of Tughril Beg," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1 (1970), 259-75.

al-Ḥākim.³⁵⁷ The Mamluk sultan was likewise indifferent to the marriage of al-Ḥākim to a daughter of the former Ayyubid ruler of al-Karak, al-Nāṣir Dāwūd, a wealthy landed dowager known as Dār Dīnār.³⁵⁸ Shortly after the death of Baybars, the two Abbasid lines of al-Mustanṣir and al-Ḥākim were joined in early Jumādā I 676/October 1277 when the caliph's son and presumptive heir Muḥammad al-Mustamsik billāh married a daughter of the late al-Mustanṣir in a ceremony attended by the caliph al-Ḥākim, the reigning sultan, and Mamluk notables.³⁵⁹

The way in which the Muslim masses of Cairo perceived the seclusion of the caliph remains a mystery, though evidence suggests an adverse effect on public opinion. When ushers restrained a man seeking audience with the chief Shāfi'ī qadi Taqī al-Dīn ibn Daqīq al-ʿId (d. 702/1302), the petitioner angrily demanded "Who is [the qadi] that I should be prevented from seeing him? Is he a caliph?!"³⁶⁰ This anecdote appears to imply that the caliph's imprisonment may have been common knowledge and perhaps resented.

Although he was isolated for the majority of Baybars's reign, the Mamluk sultan continued to make use of the caliph by widely publicizing both of his investitures as noble deeds through inscriptions all over greater Syria.³⁶¹ The caliphate, as presented in these inscriptions, was integral to the self-image Baybars and his official historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir projected to Muslim audiences as a just and exemplary Islamic sovereign.³⁶²

Rival Claimants to the Caliphate

Although Baybars had restored public peace of mind, the caliphate issue was in many ways fragile and could be disrupted or at least questioned by rival Abbasid claimants undeterred by widespread knowledge of Abbasid investitures in Cairo. In Ramaḍān 664/June-July 1266, a man presenting himself as Mubārakshāh, the sole surviving son of al-Mustaʿīm arrived in Damascus with a bedouin entourage.³⁶³ As the alleged son of the last caliph of Baghdad he had a more convincing genealogical link to the Abbasid caliphate. Presumably alarmed, Baybars

³⁵⁷ Jackson, "Domestic Politics," 59.

³⁵⁸ Shāfi'ī ibn ʿAlī, *Husn*, 55. Dār Dīnār occupied a property formerly belonging to Jamāl al-Dīn Āqqūsh Muḥammadī, a participant in Baybars's wars against Āqqūsh al-Barlī. See: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 191.

³⁵⁹ Muḥammad al-Birzālī al-Ishbīlī, *al-Muqtafā ʿalā Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 2006), 1:404; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 3:235; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:277; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 2:191.

³⁶⁰ Garcin, "Histoire," 54.

³⁶¹ Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars," 63-6; Amitai, "Some Remarks," 50-1. See for example: *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1931-91), 12, no. 4556, 4612, and 4690 (hereafter cited as *RCEA*).

³⁶² Holt, "Virtuous Ruler," 27-8.

³⁶³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:128.

ordered his Syrian representative to treat the man respectfully and dispatched two experts to investigate. When Baybars's agents failed to recognize him, the imposter was forwarded to Cairo and never heard from again. It seems most likely that the true Mubārakshāh lived out the rest of his life as a dignified prisoner in Mongol-controlled Baghdad.³⁶⁴

Scarcely two months later, another “dark-skinned” claimant appeared in Dhū al-Qa‘da 664/August 1266 and was forwarded to Cairo for detention.³⁶⁵ A third man claiming to be ‘Alī, son of al-Musta‘ṣim, appeared the same year.³⁶⁶ The precise fate of these *ad hoc* claimants is unclear in the sources.³⁶⁷ It seems likely that Baybars wished to guard and isolate them in order to impede their ability to attract support among his enemies or otherwise disturb the reign of al-Ḥākim.

The Sons of Baybars:

Al-Malik al-Sa‘īd Baraka (676-8/1277-9) and al-Malik al-‘Ādil Salāmish (678/1279)

Conditions improved mildly for al-Ḥākim after the death of Baybars in 676/1277. After inheriting the sultanate from his father, al-Sa‘īd Baraka quickly became entangled in troubles of his own and offered the caliph a role in negotiations with rival amirs supporting the claim of his brother Salāmish. Al-Ḥākim and the four chief qadis were on hand in 678/1279-80 when Baybars's senior amirs revolted over Baraka's preference for his own mamlūks, demanding reappointment to their former positions.³⁶⁸ At the summons of the young sultan, the Abbasid caliph acted as a neutral courier between parties.³⁶⁹ Ultimately, Baraka's support base evaporated and his father's amirs laid siege to the citadel until he surrendered and abdicated.

The amirs exiled the son of Baybars to al-Karak and replaced him with his brother Salāmish who ruled under the tutelage of his magnate, the *atābak* Qalāwūn.³⁷⁰ The caliph's name was removed from the coinage and replaced with Salāmish on one side and Qalāwūn on the other and both were prayed for in the Friday sermon. In Rajab 678/November 1279 Qalāwūn seized the

³⁶⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 247; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:128-9; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 25:99. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 179-80; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 136-8.

³⁶⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 248; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30:129.

³⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:554; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:426.

³⁶⁷ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 180; Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols,” 100.

³⁶⁸ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-Miṣrī, *Kitāb al-faḍl al-ma‘thūr min sirat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1998), 37-51; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:19-20; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:229; al-Birzālī, *Muqtaṣāf*, 1:452-3; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:655.

³⁶⁹ When the caliph questioned the amirs concerning their demands, they responded that they sought the deposition of Baraka. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:655.

³⁷⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:13-4.

sultanate for himself with the throne title “al-Manṣūr,” an event which, in most Mamluk sources, inaugurates a decade of near silence regarding the Abbasid caliphate.³⁷¹

Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (678-89/1279-90)

Concerning the caliph al-Ḥākim, the reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn was largely a continuation of the quiet inactivity introduced under Baybars in 664/1265. This was due in part to an apparent shift in the sultan’s understanding of his own office.³⁷² However, Qalāwūn still managed to benefit from the caliph’s presence in the political order established and consolidated by his predecessor.

Examination of the available sources for Qalāwūn’s reign provides few reasons to believe the Abbasid caliph played any active role in politics. Perhaps in maintaining Baybars’s practice, al-Ḥākim was excluded from many state ceremonies.³⁷³

While Qalāwūn’s investiture document references the Abbasid caliphate as a font of authority, there is little evidence to suggest al-Ḥākim was even present at the ceremony itself.³⁷⁴ Later historians claimed Qalāwūn did not seek investiture from the caliph.³⁷⁵ The silence regarding the caliph represents a marked contrast with the abundant coverage of Baybars’s investiture ceremony, depicted in intricate detail and included by many contemporary Mamluk chroniclers.³⁷⁶

While a prolonged removal from public life curtailed the caliph’s activities, the reign of Qalāwūn proved a quiet period of growth for the Abbasid family. Several children were born to al-Ḥākim in captivity, including his eventual successor Sulaymān in around 683/1284.³⁷⁷ In 680/1281-2 one of the caliph’s daughters married a son of the qadi Ibn Daqīq al-‘Īd, a vocal critic

³⁷¹ Hasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 158-9; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 162-4, 166-7, 169-74; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 64-71; Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Kitāb al-faḍl al-ma’tūr min sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1998), 51-4; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:20; al-Birzālī, *Muqtaḍā*, 1:457-60; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:229; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 50:29-41; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:324; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:287-9; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:655-8; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 2:225-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 385; idem, *Husn*, 2:105-6. Indeed, as sultan, Baraka had to navigate a complex web of politics and competing loyalties in the wake of his father’s death. See: Clifford, *State Formation*, 114-25.

³⁷² Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 172-4.

³⁷³ Ibid., 169-70.

³⁷⁴ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *al-Faḍl al-ma’tūr min sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1998), 52. For the investiture document of Qalāwūn, see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 10:116-20; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:129-37; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:106-10. I discuss the document in Chapter 5.

³⁷⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 51:56; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 385.

³⁷⁶ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 169-70.

³⁷⁷ Muḥammad ibn Shaddād, *Ta’rīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ (Wiesbaden, 1983), 330; Khalīl ibn Ayyak al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998), 2:421; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 181.

of Qalāwūn's regime with ties to the Shādhilī Sufī order which was a central part of pietistic opposition to some of the sultan's policies, fiscal and otherwise.³⁷⁸

Despite the caliph's marginal importance at the court of Qalāwūn, the sultan capitalized on his access to al-Ḥākim in both domestic and foreign disputes early in his reign.³⁷⁹ Qalāwūn left many of Baybars's religious policies in place and continued to support the four chief qadis and the caliphate, suppressing the latter while maintaining the title *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*.³⁸⁰ Although the sultan lacked serious rivals at the time of his accession, a later challenge appeared from the amir Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Ashqar who had been deputy (*nā'ib al-salṭana*) in Damascus while Qalāwūn acted as ward to the sons of Baybars. From Syria, Sunqur al-Ashqar defied Qalāwūn and emerged as a rallying point for unhappy elements seeking alternatives to Qalāwūn's administration.³⁸¹ On tenuous ideological footing in 679/1280 Sunqur al-Ashqar struck coins in the caliph's name and presented himself as "*al-sulṭān al-malik, qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*," a direct challenge to Qalāwūn's authority.³⁸² In reply, Qalāwūn wrote tersely to the amirs of Cairo that the Commander of the Faithful was under his "protection," and not that of Sunqur al-Ashqar. This point was recapitulated in another letter from Qalāwūn to Sunqur al-Ashqar preserved by Shāfi' ibn 'Alī.³⁸³

Qalāwūn likewise alluded to the caliph's presence in Cairo in his relations with his Mongol Muslim rivals. Hülāgū's son Abaqa (663-81/1265-82) was succeeded by his brother, the convert to Islam, Tegüdar Aḥmad.³⁸⁴ The *ilkhān*'s change of faith might have brought a brief lull in the battle, but failed to end the war between the Mamluks and Ilkhanids. It was widely held in Cairo, and modern researchers tend to agree, that Tegüdar Aḥmad was not in search of "right guidance"; rather he was hoping to soften the resistance of Muslims who supported Qalāwūn

³⁷⁸ Jean-Claude Garcin dismissed the marriage as mere social climbing in connection with the qadi's move from Qūṣ to Cairo which assumes that the caliph retained prestige in some circles of the '*ulamā*'. See: *Un centre musulman de la Haute-Égypte médiévale: Qūṣ* (Cairo, 1976), 294; 'Alī Šāfi Ḥusayn, *Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId: ḥayātuhu wa-dīwānuhu, dirāsa fī al-adab al-Miṣrī* (Egypt, 1960), 66-9; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 124.

³⁷⁹ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 170; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 42.

³⁸⁰ On Qalāwūn's use of the title see: Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 174 note 91.

³⁸¹ Ḥasan al-ʿAbbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 159; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 178-9, 181-4; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:20-1; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:14-7; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 50:42-5; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 2:233-4.

³⁸² Paul Balog, "A Dirhem of Al-Kāmil Shams Al-Dīn Sunqur, Rebel Sultān of Syria, Hitherto Unrecorded in Numismatics (679 H. = 1280 A.D.)," *Revue numismatique*, 6th series, 11 (1969): 296-9.

³⁸³ Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Faql al-ma'thūr*, 62-3; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 181; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 90-7.

³⁸⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 217-9; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:328. See: Reuven Amitai, "The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 15-43.

against the infidel Mongols on chiefly religious and ideological grounds.³⁸⁵ In any case, the first of Aḥmad's two embassies to Qalāwūn in 681/1282 demanded that the Mamluk sultan submit to the Ilkhanids on threat of war.³⁸⁶

The reply issued by Qalāwūn's chancery has raised lasting implications for the sultan's view of the Abbasid caliphate. In some versions of the letter preserved in Mamluk chronicles, after praising God and the Prophet, Qalāwūn lauded al-Ḥākim, "the master of rightly guided (*mahdiyyūn*) caliphs, the cousin of the master of messengers and the caliph whom the people of religion cling to," implying that if Tegüdar Aḥmad was sincere in his wish to be a genuine Muslim, he too was obliged to acknowledge and obey the caliph who sanctified Mamluk authority.³⁸⁷

It is a puzzling fact that with the exception of Ibn al-ʿIbrī (Bar Hebraeus) and Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, most Mamluk historians omit the references to al-Ḥākim, whereas Ilkhanid sources on the other hand, retained Qalāwūn's allusions to the caliph.³⁸⁸ Perhaps learning from his earlier confrontation with Sunqur al-Ashqar, Qalāwūn recognized that the caliphate could be used against him if it figured too prominently in his correspondence.

Baybars had put the caliphate and Islam to service in cultivating a much-needed alliance with Berke Khān of the Golden Horde. After the latter's death in 665/1267, leadership passed back to a non-Muslim branch of the family under Möngkä Temür (665-79/1267-80), who in spite of not sharing the faith of the Mamluk sultan, found it politic to uphold the status quo with Cairo.³⁸⁹ By 678-9/1280 Golden Horde leadership fell again into Muslim hands with Töde Möngkä (679-87/1280-7), and the reinvigorated friendship between the two powers facilitated the flow of new slave recruits to power the Mamluk system. Qalāwūn assumed the role, as Baybars

³⁸⁵ Holt, "A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt," 678; idem, "The Īlkhān Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 128-32; Adel Allouche, "Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 22 (1990), 437-94; Judith Pfeiffer, "Aḥmad Tegüder's Second Letter to Qalā'ūn (682/1283)," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 178 note 48.

³⁸⁶ Allouche, "Ultimatum," 437-8. See also: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 219-27; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:90; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik*, 15:290.

³⁸⁷ Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Al-Faḍl al-ma'thūr*, 102-3; Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 115; idem, *Kingship and Ideology*, 42.

³⁸⁸ Allouche, "Ultimatum," 442; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 36. More recently, Broadbridge has suggested that Qalāwūn, possibly uneasy about the role of al-Ḥākim in politics, wished to exploit the caliphate in his dealings abroad while hobbling it domestically. For a list of the sources which omit or include the reference to al-Ḥākim in the letter to Tegüdar Aḥmad, see: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 42 note 70. See also: idem, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 115 note 92.

³⁸⁹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 108-9; al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik*, 15:274.

did before him with Berke, of “elder brother” to the fledgling *khān*.³⁹⁰ Qalāwūn’s need to deal with friendly Muslim rulers demonstrated the enduring importance of the caliphate to the Mamluk sultan, even as he kept the caliph under close confinement. Controlling access to al-Ḥākim proved to be a powerful political asset for the sultan, and it is difficult to insist that the caliphate “fell into disuse” during Qalāwūn’s reign when evidence suggests that the symbolic and theoretical value continued as ever.

Qalāwūn, who may even have claimed to assume some spiritual sovereignty in his own right, still seems to have understood the caliph as a source of authority available for the sultan to assume and absorb as Baybars had done.³⁹¹ Having been delegated with caliphal authority, the caliph was essentially removed from the equation and the sultan invested with his powers to rule or bestow office at his pleasure.³⁹²

Al-Ashraf Khalīl (689-93/1290-3)

By way of an investiture deed, Qalāwūn named his son al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī as his chosen replacement in 679/1280.³⁹³ However, al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī predeceased his father in 687/1288, and succession fell instead to another son, al-Ashraf Khalīl (689-93/1290-3).³⁹⁴

Early on critical disadvantages beset al-Ashraf Khalīl: his father had little confidence in him, even expressing misgivings about “setting Khalīl upon the Muslims,” and did not even place his seal upon his son’s diploma.³⁹⁵ Worse still, al-Ashraf Khalīl had failed to win over the amirs who had earlier thrown in their lot with al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī. Because of this, modern researchers have

³⁹⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 227-8; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 176; Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols,” 103. Envoys from Töde Möngke even called on Qalāwūn in 681/1283-84 to pick up caliphal and sultanic war banners for the khān. See: Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa-al-‘uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo, 1961), 46; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:102-3; Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh ibn al-Furāt* (Beirut, 1936), 7:277.

³⁹¹ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 174-6.

³⁹² It is possible to further explore Qalāwūn’s overall attitude toward the caliphate by examining the ‘*ahd*’ documents prepared by his chancery for his sons al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī and al-Ashraf Khalīl, which I discuss in Chapter 5. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 182.

³⁹³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 185; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 91; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:68-9; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 50:51; Badr al-Dīn ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī, *Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-banīh*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1976-86), 1:59. For ‘Alī’s investiture document see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:175. See also: Holt, “A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt,” 675-6; Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 243-9.

³⁹⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir, *Tashrīf*, 52-3; Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 164; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 263-4, 270-2; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:32-4; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:159-60, 177; Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Ta’rīkh ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā’ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a’yān min abnā’ihī*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 1998), 1:29; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:208-9; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:300-1; Muḥammad al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn al-tawārīkh: sanawāt 688-699 H.*, ed. Nabīla ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Dāwūd (Baghdad, 1991), 23:46; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:312; al-Maqrīzī *Sulūk*, 1:3:745; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:320.

³⁹⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:177-8. See also: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 76.

suggested that a dire need for legitimacy drove al-Ashraf Khalīl to reach for the Abbasid caliphate.³⁹⁶ Even so, as with his father, surviving records of al-Ashraf Khalīl's investiture ceremony do not mention the presence or involvement of the caliph.³⁹⁷ Nevertheless, in Dhū al-Qa'da 689/November 1290 al-Ashraf Khalīl rode out with the symbols of his office, donning a black caliphal robe.³⁹⁸

Several months into his reign, al-Ashraf Khalīl restored the caliphate to prominence in Cairo by renewing the *bay'a* to al-Ḥākim.³⁹⁹ After capturing the last Crusader stronghold at Acre in 690/1291, al-Ashraf Khalīl returned to Cairo to provide special honors to al-Ḥākim at court on 25 Ramaḍān 690/21 September 1291.⁴⁰⁰ The caliph received gifts, clothing of distinction, and a replica of *dhū al-fiqār*, the famous two-pronged sword associated with the Prophet and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.⁴⁰¹

The Ilkhanids remained the great enemy in the east, though they suffered a period of turbulence in the wake of the death of Arghūn (683-90/1284-91) in Rabī' I 690/March 1291, followed by the succession of his brother Gaikhatu (690-4/1291-5).⁴⁰² Intelligence concerning the Mongol situation may have tempted al-Ashraf Khalīl to consider making another attempt on Baghdad.⁴⁰³ Nevertheless, the sultan eventually decided against engaging the Ilkhanids directly and instead took aim at their Armenian allies.

The caliph became a centerpiece in the sultan's war preparations. On Friday 24 Shawwāl 690/10 October 1291 the citadel mosque was decorated to receive the first public sermon

³⁹⁶ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 187-8; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 45-8. According to Robert Irwin, the caliph's primary role under al-Ashraf Khalīl was to serve the regime as a mouthpiece for *jihād*. See: *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 78.

³⁹⁷ Abū al-Fidā' claims al-Ashraf Khalīl was enthroned the morning after his father's death on 7 Dhū al-Qa'da 689/11 December 1290. See: *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:34; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:177; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:336.

³⁹⁸ Baktāsh al-Fākhirī, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2010), 135.

³⁹⁹ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Altāf al-khaṭīyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sultāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg, as *Ur Abd Allah b. Abd ez-Zāhir's Biografī över Sultanen el-Melik al-Aśraf Ḥalīl. Arabisk Tāxt med Översättning, Inledning Ock Anmärkningar Utjiven*, (Lund, 1902), 3; al-'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 3:37; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:61.

⁴⁰⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 91-2; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:56; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:137-41; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:128; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:777; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:209. On the siege of Acre, see: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 278-82; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:34-5; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:43-6, 48-52; al-Birzālī, *Muqtaṭā*, 2:225, 231-2; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:44-7; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:144-5; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:302-3; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:338; al-Kutubī, *'Uyūn*, 23:70-1.

⁴⁰¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Altāf*, 6; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:209; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:111.

⁴⁰² Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 238, 284-5; al-Birzālī, *Muqtaṭā*, 2:233-4.

⁴⁰³ Modern scholars debate whether or not Khalīl would have attacked Baghdad. See: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 76-9; Ulrich Haarmann, "Ḳhalīl, al-malik al-ashraf ṣalāḥ al-dīn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:964-5.

delivered by al-Ḥākim in several decades.⁴⁰⁴ Organizers arranged furniture deemed significant to the Prophet's family along with flat pillows and carpets. Abbasid emblems adorned the hall and Qur'ān reciters read verses and made prayers for the sultan. Al-Ashraf Khalīl ordered a company of amirs to wait on the caliph. After his sweeping entrance into the citadel, bedecked in Abbasid garb and a sword, Mamluk amirs vied to shake the hand of al-Ḥākim and absorb the blessings of his presence. After meeting the sultan and basking in ornate praise, the caliph ascended the *minbar* and delivered a *khuṭba*.⁴⁰⁵

The sultan ordered Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā'a, who, during the years of the caliph's seclusion, had been appointed chief Shāfi'ī qadī and orator of the citadel mosque, to lead congregational prayers after the caliph's *khuṭba*. After the service, the caliph returned to his residence with a newly assigned retinue of caretakers and associates to enhance his household.⁴⁰⁶

To commemorate the one-year anniversary of his father's death on the night of 4 Dhū al-Qa'da 690/29 October 1291 al-Ashraf Khalīl ordered a gathering of upper level amirs and religious dignitaries to convene at Qalāwūn's Maṣṣūriyya mausoleum complex for a Qur'ān-completion ceremony and religious retreat. Scores of lit candle arrangements flooded the room with bright light as thick smoke from incense and ambergris wafted around the participants. Attendees spent the night reciting Qur'ān and viewing marvelous treasures on display.⁴⁰⁷ In the early morning, al-Ashraf Khalīl, dressed in white, joined the caliph, clad in Abbasid black, and together they entered Qalāwūn's tomb. The pair paid respects to the "martyred" sultan as verses of the Qur'ān were recited before them, recounting God's pleasure with the followers who

⁴⁰⁴ Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:56-7 (14 Shawwāl); al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:256-7; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:220; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:338; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:141; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:128. Some sources offer 4 Shawwāl 690/30 September 1291 as the date: al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3:87; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:61.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 6-8; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:220; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:56; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:257; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57, 52:10; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:128; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275. Curiously, the caliph's words, barring minor adjustments, appear to be exactly the same as those offered thirty years earlier, following the investiture of Baybars. This reuse of the earlier *khuṭba* is intriguing. Some scholars have suggested a deliberate allusion to the promising era of Baybars. By ordering the caliph to present the same *khuṭba*, perhaps al-Ashraf Khalīl wished to evoke the spirit of Baybars to direct his assault on the Armenians. See: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 187-8; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 45; Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 6.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 11; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:218-21; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:57; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:257; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 23:81; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:128; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3:88; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 385; idem, *Husn*, 2:111.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 17; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:221; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:129; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4:2:524; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3:87; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:62, 111. In Mamluk sources, *simāṭ* often refers to an accession banquet. For the various kinds of royal feasts in the Mamluk period see: al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 3:296; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:671-3.

pledged loyalty to the Prophet under the tree.⁴⁰⁸ Poets sang and notable attendees were honored with robes. The caliph, visibly aged, eloquently addressed the gathering to speak on the importance of *jihād* and the re-conquest of Iraq.⁴⁰⁹

Before departing for the campaign, al-Ashraf Khalīl took the caliph to visit patients at Qalāwūn's hospital. For one observer, the mere sight of the pair was enough to raise the spirits and health of the inmates. From the hospital, the young sultan and elderly caliph embarked on another grand procession for inspections at the citadel whilst alms were distributed to onlookers.⁴¹⁰

Another Qur'ān completion event occurred at the tomb of Qalāwūn several months later in Rabī' I 691/March 1292.⁴¹¹ Al-Ashraf Khalīl himself appeared the next day to distribute copious amounts of wealth at his father's grave.⁴¹² At the end of the month al-Ḥākim delivered a final intensely motivational Friday sermon in the citadel mosque before the sultan and his armies departed for Aleppo, the staging ground for their siege of the Armenian stronghold Qal'at al-Rūm.⁴¹³ The reign of al-Ashraf Khalīl, however, was not to last long; a group of conspirators including the sultan's deputy (*nā'ib al-salṭana*) Baydarā and Lājīn al-Manṣūrī ambushed him on 8 Muḥarram 693/9 December 1293 during a hunting expedition.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 18; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:129. See: Qur'ān, 48:18.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 13; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:221; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:129; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4:2:524; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3:87; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:111.

⁴¹⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 18-9; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:129. For recent scholarship on Qalāwūn's hospital see: Linda S. Northrup, "Qalāwūn's Patronage of the Medical Sciences in Thirteenth-Century Egypt," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 119-30; idem, "Al-Bīmāristān al-Manṣūrī - Explorations: The Interface Between Medicine, Politics and Culture in Early Mamluk Egypt," in *History and Society During the Mamluk Period (1250-1517): Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Research College I*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014), 107-42.

⁴¹¹ According to al-Jazarī (*Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:100-1) the event took place on 21 Rabī' I 691/12 March 1292 while al-Suyūṭī's date was 29 Rabī' I 691/20 March 1292. See: *Husn*, 2:61.

⁴¹² Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:225.

⁴¹³ Ḥasan al-'Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 168; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 288-9; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 92-3; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:36-7; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:225-31; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:101; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:273; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 52:10, 13; Author Z, *Ta'rīkh salāṭīn al-mamālīk* or *Beiträge zur Geschichte der mamlukensultane*, ed. K. V. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919), 10; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 387-92; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 8:135; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:777; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:209. In this period al-Ḥākim appears to have delivered the *khuṭba* at least four times, an honor no Abbasid caliph had been permitted to do since the death of al-Rāḍī in 329/940. See: C. H. Becker, "Barthold's Studien über Kalif und Sultan," in *Der Islam* 4 (1916): 369. On the shift of Mamluk military operational staging from Damascus to Aleppo in the fourteenth century, see: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 20.

⁴¹⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 295-6; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 95-6; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:40; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:259-62; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:190-3, 209-10; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:346-7; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:377; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 52:27; al-'Umārī, *Masālik*, 15:314-5; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:340; al-Kutubī, *Uyūn*, 23:149-50; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:167; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:111.

More than his father, al-Ashraf Khalīl elevated the caliph, created a function for him in state ceremonies, spent sums on his household and even listened patiently to his advice.⁴¹⁵ “Reviver of the Abbasid state” (*muḥyī al-dawla al-‘abbāsiyya*) was an apt statement for the coins and inscriptions of al-Ashraf Khalīl whereas his predecessors had contented themselves with “*qasīm amīr al-mu‘minīn*.” To some extent this implies that al-Ashraf Khalīl may have been interested in restoring a more universal Islamic empire comprised of all the lands that the Abbasids ruled in their heyday.⁴¹⁶

Divergent interpretations of al-Ashraf Khalīl’s close relationship with al-Ḥākim exist in modern research.⁴¹⁷ On one hand, the sultan needed to vindicate his sultanate before his father’s skeptical amirs. Bringing the caliph into his father’s tomb on several occasions may have been an attempt to appeal to Qalāwūn’s old supporters among the Mamluks and rouse them for the coming battle. On the other hand, these public appearances of the caliph also struck a chord with a largely inchoate popular concept of the caliph as guide and protector of the Muslims in dangerous times. Al-Ashraf Khalīl, by reputation, was a pious Muslim ruler, certainly more so than his father. It is hard to rule out the return of the caliph to prominence as a sincere act of the sultan’s Islamic piety.⁴¹⁸ Finally, it has been argued that Khalīl’s use of the caliph produced a political inertia that thereafter mandated the caliph’s appearance at all subsequent Mamluk sultanate investiture ceremonies, including the usurpers, which many were.⁴¹⁹

Kitbughā and Lājīn

After the assassination of al-Ashraf Khalīl the dominant amirs nominally placed another son of Qalāwūn on the throne as al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 693/1293 before the eventual usurpation of the sultanate by the amir Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā al-Manṣūrī (694-6/1295-7) as al-

⁴¹⁵ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 45.

⁴¹⁶ Paul Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964), 120-4; *RCEA*, 13, no. 4959.

⁴¹⁷ Heidemann argued that al-Ashraf Khalīl’s caliphal policy reflected a conscious attempt to draw on the legacy of Baybars for support as he faced battles with the descendants of those original enemies. Irwin adds that the caliph’s actual power remained limited, but he had returned to the forefront of Mamluk politics as the mouthpiece of war propaganda with a flagrant emphasis on *jihād*. See: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 78; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 187-8.

⁴¹⁸ In his *EI*² article on al-Ashraf Khalīl, Ulrich Haarmann has discussed the piety of the Mamluk sultan. Nevertheless, the sultan closely monitored the caliph’s movements and public appearances, careful never to let al-Ḥākim out of his sight. Al-‘Aynī observed that prior to the reign of Khalīl, al-Ḥākim had been cloistered away and that after the ceremonies at Qalāwūn’s tomb, the Commander of the Faithful’s public appearances grew more frequent; Khalīl and his successors even allowed the caliph to explore the market on horseback. See: *Iqd*, 3:87.

⁴¹⁹ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 189; Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 9.

Malik al-‘Ādil in Muḥarram 694/November-December 1294.⁴²⁰ Although no detailed report of Kitbughā’s investiture ceremony remains, authorities summoned al-Ḥākim and the chief judges to endorse the coup and furnish it with *sharī‘* approval.⁴²¹ The caliph, likely coaxed under duress, denounced the youthfulness of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as the reason for his inability to rule coherently.⁴²²

The mamlūk Lājīn al-Manṣūrī, a conspirator in the murder of al-Ashraf Khalīl who had escaped the wrath of that sultan’s mamlūks, emerged to be appointed *nā’ib al-salṭana* by Kitbughā. Lājīn grew ambitious in the months that followed and made an attempt on Kitbughā’s life in 696/1296. The move ultimately forced the sultan into retirement in Syria. After Kitbughā’s flight from politics the amirs agreed on the selection of Lājīn as sultan with the title al-Manṣūr. On 10 Ṣafar 696/8 December 1296 the new sultan summoned al-Ḥākim to conclude a mutual *mubāya‘a* ceremony in which the pair exchanged investitures. When it was his turn, Lājīn received a black caliphal robe of honor (*al-khil‘a al-khalīfiyya*) from the caliph who was also mentioned in his diploma of investiture. Some days later Lājīn appeared publicly to ride in an inaugural procession, dressed in caliphal honor garments with his investiture document paraded before him. To calm unrest regarding the turnover in leadership, the sultan sent a letter to Damascus announcing his attainment of both approval from both the Cairo amirs and the Abbasid caliph who issued a *taqlīd* or letter of appointment to him.⁴²³

While the caliphate lost some of the special deference it enjoyed during al-Ashraf Khalīl’s reign (such as mention on the coinage), Lājīn continued to treat al-Ḥākim with dignity and to some extent maintained the caliph in the public eye. In addition to bankrolling the Abbasid

⁴²⁰ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 170-1; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 298,304-6; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 98-109; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:41-2; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:267, 282; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:195-6; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:347-8; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 52:34, 44; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:149; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:342; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 23:177; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:169-75; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:41, 55; al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 385; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:112; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:386. Al-Maqrīzī claims the caliph went for pilgrimage in 694/1294-5 before being returned to confinement until the reign of Lājīn. See: *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:209.

⁴²¹ Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith*, 1:248; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:386. Kitbughā’s investiture document, which I discuss in Chapter 5, named him “*qasīm amīr al-mu’mīnīn*.” See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:47-53; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:39-50.

⁴²² The Abbasid caliph himself had enjoyed ball games with the young sultan. See: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:282; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:410.

⁴²³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 310-4; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:45-6; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:313-4, 316, 319; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:332-6; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:494-5; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 52:49-52; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:319; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:822-3, 825; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 8:224, 228; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:63-70, 85, 87; al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 386; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:112. For the investiture deed issued to Lājīn see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:53-8; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:51-60. Lājīn removed *qasīm amīr al-mu’mīnīn* from the coinage although it appears on some of his later coins. Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans*, 129-31, 141. On the black caliphal robe as an emblem of sultanly sovereignty, see: William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382-1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes*, part 1 (Berkeley, 1955), 84.

household and bestowing gifts on the family, Lājīn offered the caliph opportunities to ride at his side during processions and to attend official functions as an honored guest.⁴²⁴ As Khalīl had done before him, Lājīn settled the caliph in a multi-storied residential dwelling with belvederes (*manāẓir*) in Cairo's al-Kabsh district near the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque.⁴²⁵ The sultan likewise supplied the caliph with cash, provisions, and pack animals to take on pilgrimage to the holy cities of the Ḥijāz in 697/1298 along with his children, various family members, and sons of Baybars and 'Īsā ibn Muḥannā.⁴²⁶

The sultans who reigned during al-Ḥākim's thirty-year caliphate did little to extend or project his importance outside of Cairo, and the caliph's pilgrimage was not without incident. In Mecca a minor confrontation occurred when al-Ḥākim apparently wished to have the *minbars* of the holy city deliver orations and offer prayers in his name. The local *sharīf* Abū Numayy Muḥammad (d. 701/1301)⁴²⁷ who, perhaps felt threatened, suspicious or otherwise resentful

⁴²⁴ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:195; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:828; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3:359; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62. According to al-Qalqashandī the caliph received approximately 700,000 dirhams from Lājīn. See: *Ma'āthir*, 2:118.

⁴²⁵ Although a young man when he was initially sequestered in the citadel by Baybars, al-Ḥākim outlived many of the sultans he invested, and his office absorbed authority by virtue of proximity to real power. This may have been why al-Ashraf Khalīl allowed al-Ḥākim to move into more private quarters in al-Kabsh. See: Maurice Godefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks d'après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative précédée d'une introduction sur l'organisation gouvernementale* (Paris, 1923), xxii-xxiii. The caliph had been returned to his citadel residence sometime between 693-6/1294-7. According to Ibn al-Furāt, Lājīn allowed the caliph "to live wherever he wished" before ultimately settling al-Ḥākim and his family in the belvedere residence (*manāẓir*) near the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn in 697/1297-8. See: *Ta'rīkh*, 8:224, 230. See also: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 315; idem, *Tuhfa*, 149; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, *Ḥusn*, 55; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:331-2; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:195; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 187; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261, 275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:828; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3:359; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 2:80; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:241; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62. Al-Nuwayrī describes it as "the Ṣāliḥiyya *manāẓir* known as al-Kabsh." That Lājīn "permitted" the caliph to come and go undisturbed, implies that al-Ḥākim indeed lived in a state of incarceration or at least close observation. See: Annemarie Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Agypten," *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 19-20. The caliph may have delivered a fourth *khuṭba* in the citadel mosque in 697/1297-8 according to al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209. On the *manāẓir al-Kabsh* and the surrounding district, see: Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 418 note 2; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:358-9; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:444-6. See: Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 158; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 165.

⁴²⁶ In his treatise on the caliphs and kings who completed the pilgrimage, al-Maqrīzī claims that no Abbasid caliph between Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Ḥākim of Cairo had made the journey to the holy cities. See: *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 89.

⁴²⁷ Abū Numayy was an Alid in the line of the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥasan. For his biography and genealogy, see: Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:60. See also Donald Little's discussion of Abū Numayy as ruler of Mecca during the Mamluk period: "The History of Arabia during the Bahārī Mamlūk Period According to Three Mamlūk Historians," in *Sources for the History of Arabia/Dirāsāt Ta'rīkh al-Jazīra al-'Arabiyya*, Vol. 1, pt. 2, *Studies in the History of Arabia: Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Studies in the History of Arabia*, 23rd. – 28th of April, 1977, sponsored by the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, University of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, ed. Abdelgadir M. Abdalla, Sami al-Sakkar, and Richard T. Mortel (Riyadh: Riyadh University Press, 1979), 17–23.

toward the caliph's presence, haughtily confronted al-Ḥākim and challenged him over his claim to Abbasid lineage in the form of dialogue recreated by the Egyptian *amīr al-ḥajj* and reported by the historian al-ʿAynī: "Who are you and what is said of you? Who was your father? You should be ashamed to mention your pedigree in proximity to my own!" The *sharīf* then began enumerating his noble ancestors as the elderly al-Ḥākim sat silent and failed to defend himself beyond a meek recitation of several verses praising the *sharīf*'s lineage.⁴²⁸ The *amīr al-ḥajj* stepped in to calm the situation and the caliph returned to Cairo with minor scuffs to his dignity. It is unclear why the *sharīf* perceived the caliph as a threat. Perhaps he felt able to attack an influential outsider with impunity as the caravan was in a state of ritual purity (*iḥrām*) for the pilgrimage.

During his final years in Cairo, Mamluk sources suggest the Commander of the Faithful and his family enjoyed moderate autonomy in al-Kabsh, mixing freely among the common folk at local town markets, absorbing popular culture, and appropriating the customs of townsfolk to the detriment of the last vestiges of their noble family reputation.⁴²⁹

The Second Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Death of the Caliph

When Lājīn's reign ended in assassination in 698/1299, the senior amirs recalled the Qalawunid prince al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from exile in al-Karak and restored him to the sultanate as the latest factional rivalry ran its course.⁴³⁰ The two leading contenders had been active in Lājīn's circle, but helped bring about their leader's demise. Sayf al-Dīn Salār led a faction of Turkish amirs and Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jāshinkīr had been the candidate favored by the contingent of Circassian amirs imported by Qalāwūn.⁴³¹ In al-Karak, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad received a letter confirming the unanimous consent of the important Cairene amirs, along with the approval and encouragement of the caliph. In Cairo the chief amirs staged a show coronation for the young sultan attended by al-Ḥākim, the four chief qadis, and notable amirs on 6 Jumādā I 698/February

⁴²⁸ Ḥasan al-ʿAbbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 178; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:395 (year 697/1297-8); Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:371; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:332; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 45; al-Maqrīzī, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 91. Mamluk sources disagree on the date of the caliph's pilgrimage. According to al-ʿAynī, the caliph went for pilgrimage in both 694/1295 and 697/1298. See: *ʿIqd*, 3:282, 413. Some sources mention the 694 pilgrimage: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 315; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209, while other sources only mention the 697 pilgrimage: al-Kutubī, *ʿUyūn*, 23:249; al-Qalqashandī, *Maʾāthir*, 2:118; al-Maqrīzī, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 91; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 50; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:398, 410. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 190.

⁴²⁹ Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī, *Husn*, 55.

⁴³⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 52:63; al-Kutubī, *ʿUyūn*, 23:267-9.

⁴³¹ On Salār, see: al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:94-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:5-13 and on Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, see: *Manhal*, 3:467-73.

1299. The Mamluk chancery produced a new investiture diploma on behalf of the Abbasid caliph drawn up by Shams al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Qaysarānī.⁴³² Despite earlier criticisms of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's youth and inexperience (presumably at the behest of Kitbughā and Lājīn), the caliph welcomed the return of the young sultan and delegated sultanī authority to him for a second time without incident. Several days later, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad embarked on his second inaugural procession cloaked in a black Abbasid robe and his investiture deed on display.⁴³³

Meanwhile, the Ilkhanids remained a serious threat for the Mamluks at the end of the thirteenth century. Since 694/1295, governance had been in the hands of Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān who, shortly before his succession, converted to Islam on the advice of his general Nawrūz.⁴³⁴ Islam became the religion of Ghāzān's intimates and his army was compelled to embrace the faith. As in the past, the Ilkhanid ruler's adoption of Islam had little bearing on relations with Cairo, even though news of Ghāzān's conversion had been a cause for great celebration there.⁴³⁵ The implication for Mamluk ideology appears to have been that not having a *bay'a* to the recognized *imām* of the time (the Mamluk sultan and his theoretical liege lord, the Abbasid caliph), automatically removed enemies from the faith.⁴³⁶ This represents another expression of the indispensability of the caliphate in spite of its decreased political power.

In mid-Ṣafar 699/November 1299 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad along with al-Ḥākim, the qadis, amirs, and the Egyptian army headed for Damascus to confront a Mongol advance towards Syria.⁴³⁷ After arriving on 8 Rabī' I 699/3 December 1299, Mamluk forces proceeded to Ḥims

⁴³² Al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:153; Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:59-68; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:872.

⁴³³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 323-6; Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:51-2; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-zamān*, 1:428-34, 446; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:357-63, 370-1; al-Dhahabī, *Ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, 5:387; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:320, 351; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:213-4; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:872-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:102-5, 115-7; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 386. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 191-2. In relation to earlier years, however, the caliph and qadis do not appear to have played a significant role in the ceremonial of the 698/1299 investiture. See: Holt, "Some Observations," 504.

⁴³⁴ Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:42-3; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-zamān*, 1:254-6; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:343; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 34-6. On the conversion of Ghāzān to Islam, see: Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jamī' al-tavārīkh*, 2:1253-6; Charles Melville, "Pādīshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān," in *History and Literature in Iran*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I. B. Tauris in association with the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, 1998), 159-77; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamlūk Sultanate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59, no. 1 (1996): 1-10.

⁴³⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 52:37-8; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:343; Holt, *Age of Crusades*, 110; Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition," 1.

⁴³⁶ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 42, 70, 84; Denise Aigle, "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 97-120.

⁴³⁷ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 52:69. Ibn Iyās reports that until his death, al-Ḥākim accompanied the Mamluk army in its attacks on the Mongols. See: *Badā'i'*, 1:1:410. Ghāzān's initial foray into Mamluk territory in 1299/1300 has been thoroughly discussed by Reuven Amitai in "Whither the Ilkhanid Army?"

where the Mamluks absorbed a historic defeat near Wādī al-Khāzindār. Although mosques in Damascus delivered the *khuṭba* in the name of Ghāzān, the Mongols pulled out shortly after Jumādā I 699/February 1300. A later Mongol invasion followed in 700/1300-1 which was confounded due to inclement weather, though Ghāzān went on to launch a third and final attack in 702/1303.⁴³⁸ That same year, the Mamluks wrote to Ghāzān informing him that Baghdad must be restored to the Abbasid caliph.⁴³⁹

In her study of Mamluk-Ilkhanid diplomatic correspondence from this period, Anne Broadbridge characterized the unfavorable Mongol view of the Abbasid caliphate under Ghāzān and his successor Öljeitu (1304-16) as being informed by a preference for Twelver Shī‘ism.⁴⁴⁰ The Mongol rulers came to see all Sunni caliphal dynasties as illegitimate, which was perhaps worsened by frequent Mamluk appeals to the Abbasid legitimacy of al-Ḥākim in communiqués written since the time of Qalāwūn.⁴⁴¹ Ilkhanid interest in Shī‘ism may thus have been partially linked to a parallel Islamic legitimacy capable of challenging Mamluk notions of Abbasid supremacy.⁴⁴² Traces of anti-Abbasid sentiment likewise surfaced in Ilkhanid historiography and material culture:

[Ghāzān’s minister and historian] Rashīd al-Dīn consistently portrayed the [Abbasid] dynasty as corrupt and oppressive, and lacking the divine favor bestowed on the Ilkhanids themselves. His description of the death of al-Musta‘ṣim in 1258 portrayed the last bumbling scion of a dynasty whose day was over [...] Visions both of the divine favor enjoyed by Ghāzān and Öljeitü, and of Abbasid corruption, also surfaced in the Ilkhanid artistic tradition.⁴⁴³

Ghazan’s First Campaign into Syria (1299-1300),” in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500-1800)*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 221-64.

⁴³⁸ Hasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 180; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 331-3; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:55-8, 61; al-Jazarī, *Ḥawāḍith al-zamān*, 1:461-3; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:380, 384-5, 394-7; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 52:70-81; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 79; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:403-10. Although he favored Chinggisid legitimacy and necessarily rejected Cairo’s appeals to Abbasid authority, at least one of the reasons for Ghāzān’s attacks on the Mamluks, may have been a desire to bring the Abbasid caliphate to Baghdad. See Anne Broadbridge’s review of *al-Mughūl wa-al-mamālīk: al-siyāsa wa-al-sirā’* by ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Ṣubḥī in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2007): 221-2. Charles Melville also points out that Ghāzān made use of black banners resembling those of the Abbasid caliphate. See: “*Pādshāh-i Islām*,” 170-1. On Ghāzān’s anti-Mamluk campaigns, see: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 100-2; Aigle, “Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām,” 89-96; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 73-93.

⁴³⁹ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 369.

⁴⁴⁰ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 67, 94-6. Ghāzān’s successor Öljeitu maintained many of the ruling ideals of his predecessor such as contempt for the Abbasid caliphate, which in part, may have encouraged another Ilkhanid attempt on Mamluk Syria in 711/1311.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 67-70.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

The Mongols and Mamluks traded correspondence in these years reminiscent of the tone set by Qalāwūn and Aḥmad Tegüdar thirty years earlier.⁴⁴⁴ Again, al-Ḥākim was referenced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's chancery in attempts to enlighten the *ilkhān* (or rather, *pādishāh-i Islām*, as Ghāzān favored) on obedience to the Abbasid caliph and the ruler who upheld and supported him. One letter warned Ghāzān that "he who befriends (the caliph) is protected by God, and God takes him in hand, but God will humiliate the one who opposes (the caliph), or (opposes) the ruler who elevates him."⁴⁴⁵ This included the Mamluks and their territory, as hosts and protectors of the caliphate, within the sphere of divine protection.

Upon returning to Cairo, al-Ḥākim lived out his final days in al-Kabsh where he succumbed to an unspecified disease on 18 Jumādā I 701/19 January 1302, aged between 70 and 80 years. Two days before his death the caliph summoned judges and notaries to legally designate his son Sulaymān as heir to the caliphate. State officials concealed the death of the caliph until the *nā'ib al-salṭana* Sayf al-Dīn Salār announced it before prayer and summoned all the amirs, heads of state, Sufī *shaykhs* and religious personnel to attend. The *shaykh al-shuyūkh* Karīm al-Dīn al-Āmulī, master of the Sa'īd al-Su'adā *khānqā* and the chief body-washer 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz were ordered to perform the bathing ritual and other funerary rites. The rank and file Mamluk amirs including Baybars al-Jāshinkīr came down to al-Kabsh to honor al-Ḥākim and attend his funeral bath and in doing so collected honor for themselves. The amirs, chief judges, and grandees participated in a symbolic procession on foot from the caliph's neighborhood to the nearby Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque. The *shaykh al-shuyūkh* then offered the farewell prayer for al-Ḥākim at the horse market below the citadel after the afternoon prayer. The first Abbasid caliph to be buried in Egypt was then interred in al-Qarāfa cemetery slightly south of Cairo near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa (d. 208/824) which became the traditional burial area for the Abbasid family in Cairo.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31:437, also quoted in Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 84. For similar rhetoric, see: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 359; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 4:163.

⁴⁴⁶ Ḥasan al-'Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 183; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 362-3; idem, *Tuḥfa*, 162; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 118; Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān*, ed. and trans. Li Guo as *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1:201-2 (English), 2:250-1 (Arabic) (cited hereafter as al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*); Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:59; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:332, 32:16; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 9:78-9; al-Birzālī, *Muqtaṣa*, 3:175; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 105-6; al-Fākhirī, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 171; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 53:16; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:157; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:324; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:356-7; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 584-5; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:210; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:240; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:893, 947; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 187-8; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:209; idem, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 90-1; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 4:189-90; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:147-8; idem, *Manhal*, 2:80; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:241-2; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 386; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:410; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*,

**Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Caliphate of Abū Rabīʿa Sulaymān al-Mustakfī billāh
(701-40/1301-40)**

Identified by Mamluk chroniclers as the third Abbasid of Cairo and fortieth caliph of the dynasty overall, Abū Rabīʿa Sulaymān, was born on approximately 15 Muḥarram 684/23 March 1285 during Qalāwūn's reign in the tower of the citadel to Khātūn,⁴⁴⁷ a Turkish concubine.⁴⁴⁸ Al-Dhahabī dubbed Sulaymān, the first Abbasid caliph born in Cairo, “Baghdadī in origin, Egyptian by birth.” Sulaymān reached maturity during his father's isolation in the citadel tower and later shared family accommodations at al-Kabsh.⁴⁴⁹ Reared in courtly confinement, the Abbasid prince, described in early youth as brown-skinned with a wispy beard,⁴⁵⁰ befriended the young sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, with whom he was close in age and entwined in a similar predicament.⁴⁵¹ The two princes, described as “brotherly” by Mamluk sources, bonded over polo matches, archery practice, hunting, and parading.⁴⁵²

During the seventeen years that followed the assassination of his brother al-Ashraf Khalīl (693-709/1293-1310), al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign was twice interrupted by usurpers. The caliph al-Ḥākim and the qadis presided over his first two investitures as sultan in 693/1293 and 698/1299. Although the Commander of the Faithful had been an active participant in the first ceremony, Mamluk authorities did not expect the caliph or qadis to contribute much to the proceedings of the 698/1299 investiture, other than to attend as Mamluk custom now required.⁴⁵³

2:206. See also: Ohtoshi Tetsuya, “Cairene Cemeteries as Public Loci in Mamluk Egypt,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2006): 101.

⁴⁴⁷ Al-Qaramānī alternately identifies her as “Zumurrud.” See: *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:332; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 585-6; Shams al-Dīn al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥ wa-awlādihī*, ed. Barbara Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1977), 1:92; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʾyān al-mīʾa al-thāmina* (Hyderabad, 1972), 2:279; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 387; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207. A number of historians place the birth of the caliph in 683/1284-5: al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:375; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *Aʾyān*, 2:421; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:315; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:18-9. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 181 note 16.

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:375-6; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *Aʾyān*, 2:419; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:416.

⁴⁵⁰ Al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:203 (English), 2:252 (Arabic). Al-Dhahabī, on the other hand, describes al-Mustakfī (perhaps later in life) as comely, with a pale, white complexion and black beard; an image conducive to the reality of an Abbasid caliph who likely spent much of his life secluded in towers and private residences. See: *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:375.

⁴⁵¹ Al-Shujāʿī went as far as to claim the pair shared the same date of birth. See: *Taʾrīkh*, 1:92; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919.

⁴⁵² Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Mukhtār al-akhbār*, 127-9; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:92; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:333; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 188; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:280-1; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 4:190.

⁴⁵³ Holt suggests that this may have been the first time a caliph was used merely to lend his presence to the event of investiture without actively participating in the ceremony. See: “Some Observations,” 504.

As with his first reign, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad again found himself a figurehead sultan, diverting attention from the competition between rival amirs Salār and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr.

Sulaymān had not been his father's first choice for caliphal succession. The caliph al-Ḥākim had originally planned to entrust another son, Muḥammad, with the dignity of the family office, even concluding a covenant that named him al-Mustamsik billāh. However, Muḥammad predeceased his father on 20 Dhū al-Ḥijja 695/19 October 1296.⁴⁵⁴ Al-Ḥākim next considered Ibrāhīm, a son of the late al-Mustamsik Muḥammad, but allegedly reconsidered after hearing rumors of his grandson's debauchery and questionable associates.⁴⁵⁵ Sulaymān, the eldest surviving son of al-Ḥākim, thus emerged as a third candidate, though his father seemed hesitant due to the inexperience of a young man on the cusp of his twenties.⁴⁵⁶ The young sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was equally concerned about the youth of his friend and apparently refused to pledge allegiance to Sulaymān as caliph until the chief Shāfi'ī qadi Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd affirmed his suitability for office before a council of dignitaries.⁴⁵⁷

On the morning of his father's death, Mamluk authorities summoned Sulaymān, a young man uninstructed in formal Islamic training, who had, however, "done a little work" (*ishtaghala qalīlan*), to the citadel to allow the amirs to testify that the new caliph had granted al-Nāṣir Muḥammad all the powers entrusted to him by the former caliph.⁴⁵⁸ Sulaymān reaffirmed the titles and dignities his father had conferred upon al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and draped him in black robes of honor.⁴⁵⁹ After the funerary prayers for al-Ḥākim, Sulaymān and his young cousins who

⁴⁵⁴ For al-Mustamsik's tomb inscription, see: Edward Thomas Rogers (Bey), "Notice sur le lieu de sépulture des Khalifes Abbasides, de la deuxième dynastie," *Bulletin de l'Institut Égyptien* 4 (1883): 120; *RCEA*, 13, no. 5004.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919-20; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:68; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 390.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtaṭāʾ*, 3:175; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 106; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 586; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 188; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:190; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242. Baybars al-Manṣūrī (*Tuhfa*, 162) claims the new caliph succeeded on 18 Jumādā I 701/19 January 1302.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibn al-Dawādārī said he was twenty (*Kanz al-durar*, 9:79); Author Z, *Beiträge*, 106; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:148-9; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62, 67. See also: Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1947), 76. Even with the endorsement of Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, al-Yūnīnī suggests that other complications left the matter in limbo until 24 Jumādā I 701/25 January 1302. Al-Yūnīnī also suggests that it was Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd's marriage connection between his son Muḥibb al-Dīn and a sister of al-Mustakfī which prompted strong support for the young caliph. See: al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:202-3 (English), 2:251-2 (Arabic). On Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, see: Ḥusayn, *Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd*, 66-91.

⁴⁵⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:375; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥ*, 15:349; idem, *Aʿyān*, 2:420; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:149; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 387.

⁴⁵⁹ Al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:203 (English), 2:251 (Arabic); Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, Vol. 32, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad ʿUlwī Shaltūt (Cairo: Maṭabaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1998), 16; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 9:79; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 586; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥ*, 15:349; idem, *Aʿyān*, 2:419-20; Ibn Khaldūn, *Taʾrīkh*, 5:947; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:190; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:67.

had led the funeral procession were sent back to the Kabsh palace under guard of five eunuchs who watched them closely for some time from their posts at the gate of the Abbasid residence.⁴⁶⁰

Some days later on 24 Jumādā I 701/25 January 1302, Sulaymān and the young delegation of Abbasids rejoined the amirs at the citadel for a formal assumption of the office bequeathed to the incoming caliph. In the presence of the important Cairene amirs, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad officially granted Sulaymān the title of al-Mustakfī billāh along with the black robe of the caliphate and *ṭarḥa* headdress while the caliph's cousins received honorary garments.⁴⁶¹ The sultan and amirs completed a *bay'a* ceremony similar to that which had been performed with al-Ḥākim in years past. The sultan, followed by military and religious notables, swore allegiance to the new caliph before a grand feast and public reading of the investiture document.⁴⁶² Shortly thereafter, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad set about making changes to the living conditions of the Abbasid family:

The sultan then issued his orders to ask [the caliph] to stay in the Kabsh Palace and to give [the caliph and his brother] the stipend equal to their father's allowance during his last days in addition to some bonus (*ziyādāt*) by which he made them feel at ease and be optimistic. They stayed in the Kabsh palace until Thursday, the beginning of Jumādā II (February 1, 1302), when the sultan sent a protocol officer (*mihmandār*) with a team of aides and a flock of camels to move the caliph, his brother, his nephews as well as their wives and all those under their shelter to the [Cairo] Jabal Citadel.⁴⁶³ They were given accommodations in two halls; one was called the Ṣāliḥīya Hall and the other the Zāhirīya Hall. They received their stipends as prescribed.⁴⁶⁴

The day after the *bay'a* ceremony, newly minted dinars and dirhams bore the name of al-Mustakfī, which mosque orators also mentioned in the Friday sermons of Egypt.⁴⁶⁵ The amirs

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:202-3 (English), 2:251-2 (Arabic).

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. See also: Author Z, *Beiträge*, 106; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḥ al-Islām*, 53:375; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'riḥ*, 5:893; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁴⁶² Al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:203 (English), 2:252 (Arabic); al-Birzālī, *Muqtaḥ*, 3:175; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 106; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 586; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:240; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'riḥ*, 5:893; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 188; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 4:190. Ibn Kathīr dates the reading of this document to 20 Dhū al-Ḥijja 701/16 August 1302. See: *Bidāya*, 14:20.

⁴⁶³ In Jumādā II 701/ February 1302 the sultan designated a special area of the citadel to be used by the Abbasid family. Some historians suggested this may have been al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's attempt to "honor" the family of his friend Sulaymān. See: Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'riḥ al-khulafāʾ*, 387.

⁴⁶⁴ English translation by Li Guo (*Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, 1:203). In addition to al-Kabsh, the Abbasids received luxurious Nile dwellings near Jazīrat al-Fīl as well as in proximity to the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa. Mamluk authorities also distributed fancy garments to the family members, who do not appear to have been restricted in traveling or making local visits. See: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:333; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:350; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:149.

⁴⁶⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:332; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 107; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242.

distributed reports of the new caliph's accession to Mamluk governors and clients.⁴⁶⁶ News arrived in Syria on 6 Jumādā II 701/6 February 1302 by postal courier and a copy of the investiture deed accompanied the announcement of the death and burial of al-Ḥākim, as well as the accession of his son which the Syrian qadi Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥarīrī read before an assembled crowd. Three days later the name of al-Mustakfī graced the Friday sermon at the main mosque of Damascus after which the congregation beseeched God for mercy for the late al-Ḥākim, "caliph of the Muslims."⁴⁶⁷

The fraternal friendship between sultan and caliph continued to flourish and the two frequently attended official state functions together.⁴⁶⁸ Despite a return to life in citadel internment, the presence of the new caliph continued to bolster Mamluk war aims. In early 702/1302, Ghāzān Khān renewed efforts to intimidate Cairo by encroaching on land near Syria.⁴⁶⁹ In response, envoys of the sultan arrived at Hilla in Jumādā I 702/December 1302 to present Ghāzān with an indecorous letter restating Cairo's position that the Mamluks were the true protectors of Islam against Ilkhan infidels. The letter demanded that in the interest of peace, Ghāzān must mint new coins: on one side, the Ilkhanid ruler could name himself alongside the caliph al-Mustakfī, while the lone name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad should appear on the reverse.⁴⁷⁰

As al-Nāṣir Muḥammad departed with his battalions, word reached the Syrian amirs that the sultan would be arriving with the caliph and reports of great celebration and relief swept over the masses at the news of the impending arrival of the Egyptian army.⁴⁷¹ In Ramaḍān 702/April 1303 Ghāzān ordered what was to be his final assault on Syria.⁴⁷² The Mongols rode to Damascus and encountered Egyptian forces under Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, Salār, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself. The caliph journeyed with the sultan south of Damascus near Shaqḥab to serve as a living standard, safeguarding divine support and strengthening Mamluk resolve in battle.⁴⁷³ The

⁴⁶⁶ The *khuṭba* was first given in the name of al-Mustakfī on 2 Jumādā II 701/2 February 1302. See: al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:203 (English), 2:252 (Arabic); al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:176; al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:157; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:190; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:19; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 188; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:62; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 387; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁴⁶⁷ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:177; al-Yūnīnī/Guo, *Dhayl*, 1:203 (English), 2:252 (Arabic); Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:18; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:62; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁴⁶⁸ Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 76.

⁴⁶⁹ Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:61; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:24-6.

⁴⁷⁰ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 87-8.

⁴⁷¹ Al-ʿAynī (citing a report from al-Yūsufī), *ʿIqd*, 4:226.

⁴⁷² Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 23:332; al-Ṣafadī, *Aʿyān*, 2:420; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:19.

⁴⁷³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 372; idem, *Tuhfa*, 164; Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:61-2; al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 53:375; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *Aʿyān*, 2:420; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:332, 32:28; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:26, 187; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:246; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 188; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:930-3; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:209; al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4:231-44; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:19; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:412. For a collection of

caliph rode beside the sultan, mounted for all to see in a bulbous turban, black robe (*farjiyya*), and girded with an Arabian sword, while the amirs followed on foot.⁴⁷⁴ During the battle al-Mustakfī recited from the Qur’ān and lectured portions of the army, reminding them that fighting for the sultan could not guarantee their place in heaven; instead, they must fight for their religion, their prophet, and their families.⁴⁷⁵ Participants may have recalled that the caliph’s father had played a similar role of encouraging the Egyptian army to prosecute *jihād* against the Mongols until they attained victory. Although they absorbed heavy casualties, the Mamluks successfully drove the Mongols from Syria, and as Donald Little suggests, “won the battle, perhaps as a result, in part, of the caliph’s inspiration.”⁴⁷⁶ Al-Mustakfī was again present to lead al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s triumphal army into a jubilant Damascus.⁴⁷⁷

Although hostilities with the Ilkhanids ended after Ghāzān’s death in 703/1304,⁴⁷⁸ shortly thereafter a diplomatic row with Yemen from 706-7/1306-8 pulled the caliph in once again.⁴⁷⁹ Angered by the hubris of the Rasulid leader al-Malik al-Mu’ayyad Ḥizabr al-Dīn Dāwūd (696-721/1296-1321) the Mamluks, in 704/1304-5, drafted a letter in the name of al-Mustakfī in the hope of reaffirming suzerainty over the Ḥijāz and Yemen.⁴⁸⁰ Annual Rasulid tribute for Cairo had diminished significantly by 705/1305-6 and the sultan’s court expressed impatience to the ruler of

contemporary accounts of the battle, see: ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī ghazwat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2005), 63, 71, 74, 82, 101, 113, 134, 166, 184.

⁴⁷⁴ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:375; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:411; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:246; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:209; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:19. See also: Donald Little, “Religion under the Mamluks,” *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 173.

⁴⁷⁵ Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:326; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:933; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 4:233-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:160. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 76-7.

⁴⁷⁶ Little, “Religion under the Mamluks,” 173.

⁴⁷⁷ Author Z, *Beiträge*, 113; al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:159; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:936; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 4:244. After the battle, the people of Damascus came out in droves, abuzz with happiness and prayers, to welcome al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-Mustakfī. Sultan and caliph mingled with the people and basked in their adoration, before alighting in separate quarters (the sultan at the Ablāq palace, the caliph at the Nāṣirī tomb) in the city which had been decorated for their arrival. On the return celebration which greeted the sultan and caliph in Cairo, see: Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 74-5.

⁴⁷⁸ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:63; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:260.

⁴⁷⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:130-1.

⁴⁸⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 395-9; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:131; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:7. The Mamluks took the matter of their influence in Yemen seriously and ultimately dispatched military contingents in 1322 and 1350. See: Urbain Vermeulen, “Une lettre du calife al-Mustakfī à Dāwūd b. Yūsuf b. Rasūl (707 A.H.),” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 1, *Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1992, 1993 and 1994*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 363-71; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 41-2. On Ḥizabr al-Dīn Dāwūd see: al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 2:85-6; al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn*, 23:227; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 5:307-8.

Yemen who had ignored earlier reprimands.⁴⁸¹ The outrage provoked an even more scathing letter from the Mamluk chancery in 707/1307-8 issued in the name of al-Mustakfī.⁴⁸² The message offered the possibility for a peaceful restoration of relations with Yemen combined with a latent threat of invading Mamluk armies and war-elephants.⁴⁸³

The second sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was disturbed in 708/1309 when the magnate amir Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, reluctantly forced to the top by his Circassian following, came to prominence over the amir Salār. Lacking support to assert his claim, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad feigned abdication and fled to al-Karak which became the base from which he secretly raised forces and invited sympathetic Syrian amirs to support his return to power.⁴⁸⁴ Eventually, these countercurrents of intrigue would dissolve the friendship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his Abbasid caliph.

Alone in Cairo on 23 Shawwāl 708/5 April 1309, little recourse remained to al-Mustakfī who ultimately confirmed the sultanate of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr as al-Malik al-Muẓaffar, and dressed him in a black Abbasid cloak and turban.⁴⁸⁵ Accompanied by great celebration in Cairo, the *‘ahd* document, encased in a black satin bag, was paraded over the head of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr in a great spectacle of caliphal favor.⁴⁸⁶ Popular support for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr dwindled in subsequent months as plague and bad harvests undermined his reign. The position of the new sultan worsened further when many troops defected in favor of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴⁸⁷ As news spread of the latter’s return, Baybars al-Jāshinkīr summoned the caliph for a renewal of investiture.⁴⁸⁸ The resulting document refuted al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s kinship-based pretensions to

⁴⁸¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:7, 32-3.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 2:1:33. For the text of the letter, see: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 396-9; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:421-6.

⁴⁸³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:425. I discuss the details of this letter in Chapter 5.

⁴⁸⁴ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:68-70; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:138-40; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:351, 402-3; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:375-6; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:43-5, 47.

⁴⁸⁵ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Tuḥfa*, 191; Author Z, *Beiträge*, 137-8; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:375-6; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:162; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:329; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 650; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:48, 187; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 1:287; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:232-3; idem, *Manhal*, 3:468-9, 6:19; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:112. According to al-Nuwayrī (*Nihāya*, 32:140), the mosque orators delivered the *khutba* in the name of the caliph on 29 Shawwāl. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:46; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:423. Mamluk sources do not indicate whether the caliph willingly endorsed Baybars al-Jāshinkīr or had been coerced by the amirs. See: Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of the Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, 709-741/1309-1341* (Kuwait: Kuwait University, 1978), 21.

⁴⁸⁶ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:404-5; al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:329; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:423. For the text of the document, see: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:128-35; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:68-75.

⁴⁸⁷ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:70; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:144-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:45-71. See also: Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 305; Holt, *Age of Crusades*, 112; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 52-3; Clifford, *State Formation*, 182-8.

⁴⁸⁸ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Tuḥfa*, 199-200; idem, *Zubda*, 423; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:146; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:17; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:262.

the sultanate.⁴⁸⁹ Notably, it took the position that “kingship is childless” (*al-mulk ‘aqīm*).⁴⁹⁰ It meant, in other words, that Baybars al-Jāshinkīr was no usurper against the House of Qalāwūn and indeed, disobedience to a sultan sanctioned by the caliph was tantamount to disobeying the Prophet Muḥammad himself.⁴⁹¹ Followed through to the end, the argument denies any right for the sultan to appoint his successors and leaves such power to the caliph. It also allowed the sultan the power to rule only at the caliph’s pleasure.

When mosque personnel read copies of the second investiture document of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr from the pulpits, many worshippers, after hearing mention of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, proclaimed “God grant him victory!” But after hearing Baybars al-Jāshinkīr named in the document, loudly protested “We do not want him!”⁴⁹² In other mosques the *‘amma* dismissed what was presented to them as the caliph’s document and said “We have no sultan except al-Malik al-Nāṣir!”⁴⁹³

Grasping at straws, Baybars al-Jāshinkīr sent a copy of the caliph’s document to his own son-in-law the amir Sayf al-Dīn Burulghī al-Ashrafi, whose troops had started to declare in favor of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴⁹⁴ Burulghī opened the document, noted the opening, “Verily [this document is issued] from Sulaymān,” then quoted the Qur’ān, ironically observing that “[To the prophet] Sulaymān [God has subjected] the wind!”⁴⁹⁵ To the messenger he said “Tell that fool

⁴⁸⁹ Al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 15:349; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279. Later sources report the sultan’s chastisement of other officials who issued fatwas or composed *qasīdas* denouncing him as a rebel, including the magistrate and chancery official ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (who composed the *‘ahd* of his rival) and the qadi Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā’a. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:114; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:1:431. By composing the document, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir likely forfeited his career on the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. See: Jørgen S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Maẓālīm under the Baḥrī Mamluks, 662/1264-789/1387* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut, 1985), 88.

⁴⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65-6; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:113. See also: Frédéric Bauden, “The Sons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Politics of Puppets: Where Did It All Start?” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 55-7; Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 138-9. Jo Van Steenbergen has also recently discussed the implications of this document. See: “Caught between Heredity and Merit: The amir Qawṣūn and the Legacy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (d. 1341)” [in press].

⁴⁹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:263-4.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:146; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:17; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:909. See also: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 53.

⁴⁹⁴ Al-Nuwayrī suggests that the remaining followers of Burulghī found it redundant to have to swear allegiance to Baybars II twice and thus refused. See: *Nihāya*, 32:146; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:64. According to al-Dhahabī, who regarded the document as unique among all those that had been issued to previous rulers, the investiture deed was composed by the secretary Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd. See: *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376.

⁴⁹⁵ Qur’ān, 34:12. No doubt a simultaneous mockery of the caliph. See: Lane-Poole, *History of Egypt*, 305.

[Baybars al-Jāshinkīr], by God, not a single person remains turned towards the caliph!”⁴⁹⁶ Baybars fled Cairo mere days before the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴⁹⁷ Abandoned and vulnerable, al-Mustakfī found himself in the unenviable position of having publicly denounced the ruling legitimacy of his old friend.

The third and final enthronement of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad occurred on 2 Shawwāl 709/5 March 1310.⁴⁹⁸ Al-Mustakfī attended the ceremony and awkwardly approached to congratulate the sultan. Visibly aggravated, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not mince words to the caliph; “Are you here to greet a rebel (*khārījī*)? Was I a rebel? Does Baybars come from Abbasid stock (*sulālat banī ‘Abbās*)?”⁴⁹⁹ Fearful, or perhaps wishing to keep his dignity, the caliph kept silent. To add to the insult, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad openly ignored the caliph’s endorsement of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr.⁵⁰⁰ The unpopularity of the latter coupled with zeal for the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad represents a turning point for the Cairo caliphate. This may have been a key opportunity for an incoming sultan to rid the realm of the caliphate at a time of disgrace.

The caliph proved unable to ease the sultan’s misgivings and in spite of support from the Shāfi‘ī qadi Ibn Jamā‘a, could not convince al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that earlier testaments for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr had been supplied under duress.⁵⁰¹ Thus al-Nāṣir Muḥammad most likely saw al-Mustakfī as a dangerous liability for the remainder of his reign. Nevertheless, the sultan maintained benevolence and for some time satisfied himself by secluding the caliph while keeping tabs on his actions.⁵⁰²

Few details of al-Mustakfī’s activities during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s third reign have survived in Mamluk sources. While he was confined to the citadel and brought out only to participate in official ceremonial connected with the regime, the caliph lived a full family life and

⁴⁹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:64; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:262; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:112; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 112; idem, “The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 2 (1975): 248; idem, “Some Observations,” 506.

⁴⁹⁷ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:71-3; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:146-7; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:438; al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:162-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:112-3.

⁴⁹⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:155; al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:442; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:19.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:54; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:73; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:8; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 112.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibn Iyās makes no mention of any confrontation between caliph and sultan and instead says al-Nāṣir Muḥammad received *bay‘a* from al-Mustakfī along with the ceremonial black embroidered robe, sword, and turban. See: *Badā‘i*, 1:1:431.

⁵⁰¹ For the first time in a Mamluk document, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is named sultan of the Arabs, Persians, and Turks (a title later used by the Ottomans). See: al-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 22-4.

⁵⁰² In 709/1309 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad initially refused to speak to al-Mustakfī and left him to languish in the tower with his women and belongings. The amir Qawṣūn asked the sultan to allow the caliph to continue living in his residence. See: al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:14, 70, 92-3; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:416, 502-3; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187. According to al-Dhahabī, however, the sultan pardoned the caliph and ultimately accepted the idea that al-Mustakfī had been powerless to stop Baybars al-Jāshinkīr from taking power. See: *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376.

fathered several children.⁵⁰³ He prematurely selected his son Khiḍr as heir to the caliphal covenant (*walī al-‘ahd*) but the boy predeceased him in Jumāda II 710/October-November 1310 and was interred at the family mausoleum.⁵⁰⁴ Another son, Baraka (d. 714/1315), also named presumptive heir as al-Mustawthiq [or possibly al-Muhtadī billāh] in an ‘*ahd*’ document, failed to outlive his father.⁵⁰⁵ Access to the caliph by the ‘*ulamā*’ remained unimpeded, and historians among them recorded details of his life in captivity. In their efforts to enshrine the caliph as a pious and versatile man wronged by the sultan, Mamluk sources claim the caliph was a great aesthete with keen interest in music and singing, and that he had nurtured a love for archery and polo throughout his life.⁵⁰⁶ Although one source describes the caliph as somewhat indecisive in his own personal affairs,⁵⁰⁷ he did attempt to cultivate a social life and spoil his intimate entourage. When able, al-Mustakfī entertained prominent men of letters such as Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 763/1363) who visited the caliph numerous times and described him as physically suited to the regency of his office and as one who possessed a kingly demeanor.⁵⁰⁸ Al-Mustakfī had a number of companions whom he met with regularly and whose needs he tried to fulfill through his own resources.⁵⁰⁹ According to al-Dhahabī, the caliph was particularly fond of treating a select few to enjoy private audiences with his singing slave girls.⁵¹⁰

Despite his mistrust of the caliph, several instances indicate that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad continued to invoke the religious authority embodied by al-Mustakfī when need arose. In 713/1313, as a token of goodwill toward Toqtogha or Toqta (Arabic: Tuqtāy), the khān of the Golden Horde (690-712/1290-1312), al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent several chests of fine fabric and a message stating that the two rulers would walk side-by-side to defeat their common enemies and after retaking Baghdad, “return the caliph to the throne (*kursī*) of his caliphate.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰³ Many of al-Mustakfī’s sons appear to have predeceased him, though at least five survived him: Aḥmad (al-Hākim II), Abū Bakr (al-Mu’taḍid I), Ḥamza, Ayyūb, and Khalīl, as well as four daughters: Abla, Sa’ūda, Ruqayya, and Nafisa. See: al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:344; al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:92.

⁵⁰⁴ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 32:171; al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 2:421; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:204.

⁵⁰⁵ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 218; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:389; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:337-9.

⁵⁰⁶ Indeed, the caliph could often be seen sporting a *jawkān* across his shoulder, a type of satchel associated with polo. See: al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:92; Mūsā al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*, ed. Aḥmad Huṭayṭ (Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1986), 362; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:448; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁵⁰⁷ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376.

⁵⁰⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 15:349; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:207.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:21.

⁵¹⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376.

⁵¹¹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 9:281; Maḥāsin Muḥammad Waqqād, *Miṣr fī al-‘Asr al-Mamlūkī: dirāsāt ḥaḍārīyya* (Cairo: Miṣr al-‘Arabiyya lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī’, 2006), 62-3. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s appeals to Islam and the caliphate seem peculiar in light of Toqtogha’s Shamanist leanings. It was his

The next year, to mark the completion of a new mosque adjoining the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa, an important descendant of the Prophet buried in Cairo, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad summoned al-Mustakfī on 8 Ṣafar 714/24 May 1314 to attend the first *khutba* delivered at the structure by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jawharī, inspector of the royal treasury (*shāhid al-khizānat al-sulṭāniyya*).⁵¹² In 718/1318 the sultan, whose grip on power had grown secure enough that he could leave Cairo for pilgrimage on several occasions, brought the caliph and thirty amirs in a *hajj* caravan that left for Mecca on 9 Dhū al-Qa‘da/2 January 1319 and returned in Ṣafar (March-April 1319) the next year.⁵¹³ Some years later, the sultan summoned al-Mustakfī in 732/1331 to provide formal recognition of his son Ānūk as heir before the qadis, but, fearing the probability that his offspring would develop into a rival during his lifetime, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad changed his mind.⁵¹⁴

Yet the old rancor between caliph and sultan was never fully extinguished: events in 736/1335 culminated in the first banishment of an Abbasid from Cairo. Although many Mamluk sources entertain colorful hearsay, the precise cause of the dispute is difficult to pinpoint although it occurred in the climate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s purges and paranoia during his third reign.⁵¹⁵ Some sources imply that security around the caliph was not as tight as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wished. The sultan was vexed by rumors that al-Mustakfī had several regular visitors, notably a *jandār* guardsman called Abū Shāma (d. 758/1357), a jurist associate, and one of the sultan’s mamlūks. Together the trio called on the caliph at the home of the Abbasid family in al-Kabsh.⁵¹⁶ The fisc supervisor of the sultan’s private holdings (*nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*) Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nashw (d. 740/1339) was also apparently a regular visitor to the caliph’s residence.⁵¹⁷ The sultan may have feared that al-Mustakfī was cultivating a network of traitorous amirs and

successor Özbek, who brought the line to Islam once again. See: DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, 110-1, 118-21; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 131.

⁵¹² Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 585 note 1; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4:1:214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:199. On the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa, which would later become a source of revenue for the Abbasid family in Cairo, see: Yūsuf Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafīsa, Sa légende, son culte et son cimetière,” *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 42.

⁵¹³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:450. On al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s earlier *hajj* in 712/1312, see: Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:85-6. (Abū al-Fidā’ believed this pilgrimage occurred in Dhū al-Qa‘da 719/December 1319 and not the year before, and that the sultan returned in 720/1320. See: *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 4:101-2).

⁵¹⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:343; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 1:497-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:99. On this incident and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s struggles with succession, see: Holt, “Position and Power,” 239; idem, *Age of the Crusades*, 119; Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 3 (1994): 380.

⁵¹⁵ Al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 387.

⁵¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī describes a second visitor as an anonymous citadel muezzin. See: *Sulūk*, 2:2:416.

⁵¹⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:20. On this intriguing and sometimes detested figure in Mamluk history, see: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 118-9; Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 113-4; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 73-80; idem, “The al-Nashw Episode: A Case Study of “Moral Economy,”” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 207-20.

administrators to undermine his own authority. When word reached the sultan that Abū Shāma was practically a *fixture* in the caliph's home, he was accused of dereliction of duty, summoned for a thrashing, and banished to Ṣafad in Syria for several months.⁵¹⁸

Some evidence suggests that al-Mustakfī may have been seduced by the opportunity to increase his religious authority. A formal redress, evidently in the caliph's renowned handwriting, complained about the sultan's absence from sessions of holy law (*majlis al-shari' al-sharīf*) and accused al-Nāṣir Muḥammad of negligence in religious matters, much to the sultan's irritation.⁵¹⁹

Intrigue within the Abbasid house itself may have been the tipping point. Syrian chroniclers blamed the ambitions of al-Mustakfī's son and heir (*walī al-'ahd*) "al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh" Muḥammad (d. 738/1338),⁵²⁰ as well as the caliph's nephew Ibrāhīm (later the caliph al-Wāthiq billāh), who allegedly went to the sultan to secretly slander al-Mustakfī in hopes of obtaining the family office for himself.⁵²¹ The scandalous marriage of this Ibrāhīm (or another like-named son of the caliph) to a singing girl in 725/1325 ended in forced annulment and embarrassment for the family.⁵²² Another son of the caliph, Ṣadaqa, brought disgrace on the Abbasid house both on account of his passion for a certain mamlūk and for coveting the lavish enjoyments at one of the family's Nile residences near Elephant Island (*Jazīrat al-Fīl*), which aroused the sultan's resentment towards the caliph.⁵²³

On 13 Dhū al-Qa'da 736/23 June 1336, authorities again placed the caliph and his immediate family under close surveillance at their old citadel quarters in the now colloquially-

⁵¹⁸ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:14, 70; al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir*, 362; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:416. According to al-Dhahabī it was the caliph's son Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad who was a close confederate of Abū Shāma rather than al-Mustakfī himself. Muḥammad also had two contacts amongst the Ismā'īlī assassins (*fidāwīs* or *fidā'īs*) active in Cairo. The caliph apparently wrote to his son warning him to curtail his clandestine activities, though Mamluk authorities ultimately captured the *fidāwīs*, bisecting one and burning the other alive. See: *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 53:344. For some comment on the activities of the Ismā'īlī *fidāwīs* under the early Mamluks, see: Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 147, 164, 169, 176, 194, 201-3, 208; Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 176-81. Charles Melville has studied al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's use of *fidāwīs* against his rival Qarāsunqur during the early decades of the fourteenth century. See: "Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger: The Role of the Isma'ilis in Mamlūk-Mongol Relations in the 8th/14th Century," in *Medieval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. F. Daftary (Cambridge, 1996), 247-63.

⁵¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 389; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 80.

⁵²⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 53:344; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 5:188. See also: al-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 27. Al-Dhahabī describes Muḥammad as handsome and perceptive, a memorizer of the Qur'ān and jurisprudence, as well as a skilled polo-player who died of illness at twenty-four after the family was exiled to Qūs.

⁵²¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:68; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 390.

⁵²² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:268. This seems strange considering the caliph's own well-known penchant for singing slave girls.

⁵²³ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 15:350; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:416. The caliph had access to a number of residences near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa and Elephant Island. See: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 23:333; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:590-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:21.

styled “tower of the caliph,” with a new *jandār* stationed at the door.⁵²⁴ The caliph’s nephew Ibrāhīm was lodged in a nearby tower with his family and a sentry of their own. Both men were barred from leaving or accepting unauthorized visitors.⁵²⁵ The detention of al-Mustakfī lasted just over five months until 21 Rabī‘ I 737/28 October 1336, thanks in part to the intervention of the amir Qawṣūn (d. 742/1341) an intimate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who pleaded with the sultan to restore the caliph to his residence in al-Kabsh.⁵²⁶ Mamluk sources decried the decision to sequester the caliph as an unpopular move, which “most reasonable people found perplexing.”⁵²⁷

However, not all of the sultan’s counsel concerning the caliph was favorable. At a private meeting with the qadis, Jalāl al-Dīn Qazwīnī urged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to take drastic action lest the caliph take a public stand against him capable of producing dire political consequences.⁵²⁸ Incensed, the sultan exiled al-Mustakfī and the roughly 100 members of his household to the Upper Egyptian settlement of Qūṣ on 19 Dhū al-Ḥijja 737/19 July 1337 under the supervision of the amir Quṭluqtamur Qulī.⁵²⁹

The new abode of the Abbasid family proved to be a military outpost that served to maintain order among local tribes while also functioning as a containment area to deter and detain “potential troublemakers” from Cairo’s point of view.⁵³⁰ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad instructed the governor of Qūṣ, the amir Ṣafī al-Dīn, to personally tend to the caliph and his family.⁵³¹

⁵²⁴ Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il, *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍā’il*, ed. and trans. Samira Kortantamer (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1973), 62; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥī*, 15:350; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:947; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:209; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:281; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:115; idem, *Manhal*, 6:21; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:472; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:209. Al-‘Aynī reports that the tower had been known as “the caliph’s tower” (*burj al-khalīfa*) since 696/1296-7 after Lājīn had made it a residence for the caliph al-Ḥākim. See: *Iqd*, 3:359.

⁵²⁵ Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 3:875; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 62; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:176; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:403; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:115; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:472; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:209.

⁵²⁶ Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 3:929; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 65; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥī*, 15:350; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:177; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk* 2:2:416; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:209; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 9:115; idem, *Manhal*, 6:21; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:472. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 80.

⁵²⁷ Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 2:420.

⁵²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:417; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:279. This seems a rather strange point to argue considering al-Mustakfī’s support for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr had been resoundingly ignored.

⁵²⁹ Bakṭāsh al-Fākhīrī, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der mamlukensultane*, ed. K. W. Zetterstéen (Leiden, 1919), 194; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhīrī*, 314; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:14; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥī*, 15:350; idem, *A’yān*, 2:420; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:178, 180, 187; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:417; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:209-10; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:242-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 389; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:209. Several historians suggest this event occurred a year later in 738/1337-8: Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:469; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:297; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:947; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:21; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:474 (12 Dhū al-Ḥijja 738/1 July 1338).

⁵³⁰ Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:470; al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 2:420; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:67; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:474-5. See also: Garcin, *Qūṣ*, 200-1; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 80-1. It is unclear whether exiles in

The Abbasids remained in Qūṣ for several years, establishing local connections and attempting to draw attention to the disrespectful treatment suffered by the Commander of the Faithful and his kin.⁵³² During these years, the caliph's yearly stipend gradually decreased from 5,000 dirhams to 3,000 and then finally to 1,000, forcing many of the women in the caliph's family to sell their clothes at nearby markets to produce sufficient income for the household.⁵³³

Nevertheless, the name of al-Mustakfī remained in the weekly *khutbas* of Egypt and Syria.⁵³⁴ Mamluk sources imply that the caliph's deportation unsettled the population, and inspired an outpouring of grief. Public opinion favored the caliph, and dismay regarding the sultan's policy may have fomented an unspecified degree of civil unrest.⁵³⁵

Resigned to his fate, al-Mustakfī remained at Qūṣ for another four years. Several months before the caliph's death, Ṣadaqa, his son and fourth presumptive heir to the caliphate, passed away, hurling the caliph, we are told, into a deep depression until his own demise in Sha'bān 740/February 1340, aged around 56.⁵³⁶ Before his death, al-Mustakfī assembled forty witnesses

Qūṣ lived among the populace or were confined to solitary cells. We do know that "house-arrests" of amirs and high functionaries multiplied in that city during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

⁵³¹ Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāẓir*, 363.

⁵³² Garcin, *Qūṣ*, 201.

⁵³³ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:421; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:417; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 2:280. From al-Dhahabī, we learn that part of the caliph's stipend came from crop yields as well as money taken by the Mamluks as part of the poll tax on non-Muslims (*jizya*). See: *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376. Al-Mustakfī also appears to have borrowed money (or possibly singing slave girls!) from a local slave-merchant (*rakaba amīr al-mu'minīn ilā dikkat al-nakhs wa-yaqtaraḍ*). A *dikka* (or *dakka*) is a small (wooden, stone, or marble) elevated structure or platform in the market. See: Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12, 15. On domestic slave girls and concubines in the Mamluk period, see: Yossef Rapoport, "Women and Gender in Mamluk Society," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 8-12.

⁵³⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:403; Ibn Ḥajar quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:67; al-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 29.

⁵³⁵ Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:469-70; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:420-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:67; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474; al-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 30.

⁵³⁶ Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 207; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 342-3; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; idem, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:186; al-'Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:358; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:469; al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:70, 92; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 88 (8 Dhū al-Qa'da 740); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāḥī*, 15:350; idem, *A'yān*, 2:421; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 2:282; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:21; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474. According to al-Maqrīzī, the caliph died on the fifth or twelfth of Sha'bān 740 (*Sulūk*, 2:2:502; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210). Many Mamluk chroniclers offer conflicting dates and statements: Ibn Ḥabīb (*Tadhkira*, 2:315) states that the caliph died at age 57. According to al-Qalqashandī the caliph died in late Shawwāl 740, while later authors claim al-Mustakfī died and was buried in Qūṣ in Sha'bān 740: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:290; idem, *Manhal*, 6:21; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392. Elsewhere, however, Ibn Taghrībirdī (and other authors) place the death of the caliph a year later in Sha'bān 741: *Manhal*, 1:308; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474; al-Qaramānī, *Akhhbār al-duwal*, 2:209. The latest date for the caliph's death appears to be 10 Sha'bān 742 (Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189). After the caliph's death, memories of his brief tenure in Qūṣ appear to have survived into the seventeenth century. Evilya Çelebi (d. after 1095/1684), the Ottoman traveler, visited several ruins in Qūṣ over the course of his travels in Egypt, including a large mosque that may have been built by (or for) the exiled caliph. He also described the *qubba* under which the caliph would have been buried. Nevertheless, Evilya Çelebi did not mention a reason for the caliph's exile and seems to have confused al-

and the judge (*hākim*) of Qūṣ and drew up a written statement (*mashrūh*) naming another son, Aḥmad, *walī al-‘ahd* to the caliphate.⁵³⁷ The governor of Qūṣ informed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad of the caliph’s death and without the sultan’s approval, the caliphate of Aḥmad al-Ḥākim was ratified in late Shawwāl 740/April 1340 and his name briefly mentioned from the *minbars* in some sectors of Mamluk territory.⁵³⁸ The succession to al-Mustakfī proved to be anything but smooth, however, as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, evidently seeking to thwart the caliph he despised even in death, scorned the testament and quickly suppressed al-Ḥākim II in favor of a rival Abbasid candidate of his own choosing.⁵³⁹

* * *

Banished to Qūṣ for his intrusion into politics, the participation and authority of the caliph al-Mustakfī nevertheless proved crucial to sultans and amirs during moments of vulnerability. Moreover, the caliph enjoyed approval by the public at large, though we still know little about the nature of the support.⁵⁴⁰

Al-Mustakfī had taken office during an apparent lull in caliphal relevance at the Mamluk court. By the early fourteenth century, caliphal investiture was not the sole viable source of legitimacy on offer to a Mamluk sultan: other considerations such as the consensus of Cairo

Mustakfī’s Baghdadian origins and investiture by Baybars with that of al-Mustanṣir billāh. He also composed a brief sketch of the Abbasids of Cairo, see: *Evliya Çelebi seyahatnamesi*, ed. Seyit Ali Kahraman (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 10:29-30, 426-7. See also: Garcin, *Qūṣ*, 201 note 4.

⁵³⁷ Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:470; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:70; al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 207, 225; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 342, 37; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 88; al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 2:421; idem, *Wāfi*, 15:350, 30:103; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:315; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189-90; al-Maqrīzī *Sulūk*, 2:2:502; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 1:308; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī al-Ḥanafī [al-Malaṭī], *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2002), 1:234 (hereafter cited as al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:474; al-Qaramānī, *Akhhār al-duwal*, 2:210-1. Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān had first been dubbed al-Mustanṣir (or al-Musta‘ṣim), before later settling on al-Ḥākim. Al-Qalqashandī and al-Suyūṭī both interpreted the choice of al-Ḥākim as an obvious homage to his grandfather. See: al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 1:220-1; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:187, 191; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:261; idem, *Ma’āthir* 2:133, 145; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:159; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392, 399.

⁵³⁸ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:315; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189-90; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:261; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:146; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234. Some historians claim al-Ḥākim II had initially been named al-Mustanṣir II: al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 1:220, idem, *Wāfi*, 15:350, 30:103; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:191.

⁵³⁹ Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 207; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 343-4; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 88; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:350, 30:103; idem, *A’yān*, 1:220; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:947, 973; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:502-3; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:290-1; idem, *Manhal*, 6:21-2; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243, 245; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:67-8; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:474. Al-Dhahabī points out that ceremonial prayers to mark the caliph’s death in absentia were not performed in Cairo or Syria as they had been for his father. See: *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376.

⁵⁴⁰ Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān*, 2:420-1.

amirs, designation by a previous sultan, and Qalawunid dynastic legitimacy also retained influence.⁵⁴¹

In the end, considering that al-Mustakfī had no army of his own, it seems peculiar that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could not content himself with simply isolating the caliph in the citadel as his predecessors had done. The sultan's choice of exile to Qūṣ no doubt reflected a fear that the caliph could and would be used to support a new usurper of the sultanate or otherwise disrupt the sultan's own plans for succession.⁵⁴² Exile to a remote outpost -- though widely unpopular -- was more acceptable than a death sentence or even a beating. By allowing the caliph's name to remain in the *khuṭba*, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also reminded subjects that the caliph continued to be a part of the sultanate and had not been put to death.⁵⁴³ Al-Mustakfī, despite his exile to a distant outpost, was still formally caliph until death. This allowed the Mamluk sultan to contain and ignore the Abbasid caliphate, while keeping the caliph and his family beyond the reach of potential rivals in Cairo.

The Brief Infamy of al-Wāthiq billāh (740-1/1340-1)

Determined to settle the caliphate question himself, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sent a postal courier (*barīdī*) carrying orders for the surviving Abbasid family members in Qūṣ to return to Cairo.⁵⁴⁴ Family representatives sought to inform the sultan of the *'ahd* document that named Aḥmad al-Ḥākim II to the caliphate in his father's name.⁵⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the Mamluk sultan's estrangement from al-Mustakfī likely provoked his prompt dismissal of Aḥmad despite the powerful legal authority backing his designation in Upper Egypt. Amidst confusion, mosque orators in Egypt and Syria went at least four months without naming a caliph on Fridays.⁵⁴⁶ Instead, the sultan ordered that the sermon be given in the name of Aḥmad's cousin Ibrāhīm, who

⁵⁴¹ Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks*, xxi; Holt, "Position and Power," 239; Levanoni, "Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," 376, 379, 383.

⁵⁴² A-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 27-9.

⁵⁴³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:67; al-Ḥajjī, *Internal Affairs*, 29-30.

⁵⁴⁴ For a classical discussion of the *barīd* system, see: Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, *al-Ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, ed. Samir al-Droubi (Karak, 1992), 265-9. On the function of the Mamluk *barīd* system, see: Adam Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 165-85.

⁵⁴⁵ The surviving Abbasids arrived in Cairo in late Ramaḍān and on 12 Shawwāl were relocated to a residence near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa. The extended families of al-Mustakfī and his nephew Ibrāhīm were assigned a stipend in cash and kind. See: al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:70; al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 207-8; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 342-4; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 81.

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:503; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 391. The Mamluk amir Baktāsh al-Fākhirī (d. 744/1344) describes the period in which no caliph was named as three months or thirteen Fridays. See: *Beiträge*, 208; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 344.

had been canvassing for the office, even flaunting an *'ahd* testament allegedly written by his grandfather al-Ḥākim I which named him successor.⁵⁴⁷ During a private meeting on 15 Sha'bān 740/15 February 1340 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad concluded a secret *bay'a* with Ibrāhīm, naming him al-Wāthiq billāh before sending him home with a praetorian guard of chamberlains.⁵⁴⁸

Early the next month, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad summoned the political community (*ahl al-hall wa-al-'aqd*) to the Palace of Justice (*Dār al-'Adl*) for their monthly meeting and boldly commanded participants to pledge allegiance to Ibrāhīm as caliph.⁵⁴⁹ No doubt bristling at the sultan's presumption, the qadis retorted that not only was the impious Ibrāhīm morally unfit for the caliphate, they had also accepted the legality of al-Mustakfī's designation of al-Ḥākim II which had been witnessed and ratified by local religious authorities in Qūṣ, and emphasized to the sultan that "none but [the late caliph al-Mustakfī] had the right to establish [a new caliph] and he had appointed his son Aḥmad."⁵⁵⁰ After lukewarm assurances that Ibrāhīm would now "walk a path of righteousness," the sultan informed the qadis that regardless of their consent or lack thereof, Ibrāhīm should henceforth be honored as the caliph al-Wāthiq billāh, a development reflected in Friday sermons beginning in Dhū al-Qa'da 740/May 1340.⁵⁵¹

The image of al-Wāthiq in some Mamluk sources is far from positive. In his *Masālik al-absār*, the head of the chancery and *kātib al-sirr* Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, paints a vivid picture of the antagonisms brought on by the caliphate of al-Wāthiq. For al-'Umarī, the caliph became an insufferable presence for both the *'ulamā'* and nobles at court. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad received numerous complaints about the caliph but entertained none of them. The *Masālik's* frank testimonial regarding al-Wāthiq condemned the caliph as one who had been "reared in dishonor and neglected piety."⁵⁵² Al-'Umarī described the caliph as pleasure-loving, extravagant, driven by desperation, and surrounded by base companionship.⁵⁵³ Most objectionable about the caliph were reports of his pigeon-fancying, gambling on illegal ram and cock fighting, and living beyond his

⁵⁴⁷ Some sources suggest that Ibrāhīm was a *son* of al-Ḥākim I and brother of al-Mustakfī. See: Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 89; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234. On Ibrāhīm's relationship with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 390; idem, *Husn*, 2:68.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 189; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:261; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:502; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245. Al-Ṣafadī emphasized the secret nature of this *bay'a*, which was a private affair between sultan and caliph, perhaps to quickly exclude the opposing members of the religious class. See: *A'yān*, 1:220, 2:421.

⁵⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:502-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474.

⁵⁵⁰ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:70; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:503; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:474.

⁵⁵¹ Al-Fākhīrī, *Beiträge*, 208; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhīrī*, 344; Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 89; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:503; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:62; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 81; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 29-30 and notes.

⁵⁵² Al-'Umarī quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 391-2.

⁵⁵³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:68.

means. According to al-‘Umarī, al-Wāthiq constantly required funds to cover the mounting debts which drew him into the seamy side of Cairo life through a vicious cycle of borrowing and extortion that scandalized the Mamluk establishment. Even common Cairenes were said to have mocked him, perhaps even before his investiture, as “the beggar” (*al-Musta‘ī billāh* – surely a taunt toward the somber Abbasid regnal titles).⁵⁵⁴ The case of al-Wāthiq implies that court expectations for the caliphate dictated what kind of man must occupy the office and surely not one whose follies “inspired great pity in the hearts of the people.”⁵⁵⁵ More importantly, the sultan was accountable to ensure that the best candidate held the position. That the qadis and other courtiers felt they had the collective power to *resist* the sultan on this issue illustrates their influence on caliphal succession which to some degree manifested itself as a hiatus on caliphal mention in the Friday sermons for a third of the year.⁵⁵⁶

Those offended by the caliph’s notoriety found a champion in the grand qadi Abū ‘Umar ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn Jamā’a who frequently pleaded with the sultan to remove the name of the unworthy caliph from the Friday sermon.⁵⁵⁷ Before al-Wāthiq’s accession, Ibn Jamā’a had gone to great lengths to expose his immorality, but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad stubbornly dismissed such concerns, arguing that “he who has repented his sin is like one who has committed none. It was I who gave him the office, so observe the mandate.”⁵⁵⁸

Favored by the religious community as the genuine heir of al-Mustakfī, the counter-claim of al-Ḥākim II enjoyed support among those anxious to eject al-Wāthiq from office. Perhaps deliberately oblivious to the controversy, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad maintained al-Wāthiq’s monthly

⁵⁵⁴ Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 89; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:62; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:244; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 390; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:475. Sir Thomas Arnold suggested that the caliph’s decreased income and subsequent neediness encouraged commoners to call him the “beggar,” while in all likelihood al-Wāthiq billāh received a substantial pension, but used to “beg” or extract money from courtiers to cover the costs of his gambling. See: *Caliphate*, 100. For a discussion of sarcastic titles and nicknames used for rulers and high officials, see: Waqqād, *Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, 3-35.

⁵⁵⁵ Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 89.

⁵⁵⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:502-3; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 117-8. It may well have been the jeering populace which urged the ‘ulamā’ to oppose the sultan’s decision for fear that the caliphate was becoming a mockery among Cairenes. See: Fāḍil Jābir Ḍāḥī and Asrā’ Maḥdī Mizbān, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm fī ‘aṣr al-mamālīk* (Damascus, 2011), 59.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn Jamā’a (d. 766-7/1366) was the son of Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā’a, the famous author of the *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, a Mamluk manual on governance discussed in Chapter 3. See also: Kamal S. Salibi, “The Banū Jamā’a: A Dynasty of Shāfi’ite Jurists in the Mamluk Period,” *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 100-2.

⁵⁵⁸ Mufaḍḍal, *Chronik*, 89; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:503; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:62; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:243; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:68; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 391-2. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 81.

stipend of 3,560 dirhams, nineteen units (*irdabb*, a weight measurement) of wheat, and ten *irdabb* of barley for his household and animals, which the caliph's enemies at court could not prevent.⁵⁵⁹

Mamluk sources, hardly uniform in emphasizing the good deeds of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, present an array of the sultan's alleged deathbed attitudes towards the caliphate. Perhaps interested in placing the sultan on the right side of history and thereby preserving his legacy from the alleged infamy of al-Wāthiq, some accounts claim the sultan, having regretted his decision, acquiesced, and heeded the protests of Ibn Jamā'a.⁵⁶⁰ Al-Wāthiq was removed and the sultan sanctioned the return to office of al-Ḥākim II on the first day of 742/17 June 1341.⁵⁶¹ Mamluk chroniclers from the Qalawunid period including al-Shujā'ī and Ibn al-Wardī, however, state that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was content to leave al-Wāthiq in the caliphate until his death, while al-'Umarī claimed that personal piety finally forced the sultan to rescue the Muslims from an abhorrent and unscrupulous caliph.⁵⁶²

Little about the life of al-Wāthiq was recorded for subsequent years as most authors seemed happy to forget him. Likely he thrived in confinement until his death on 4 Sha'bān 748/9 November 1347.⁵⁶³ Several children of al-Wāthiq were buried with their father in the Abbasid mausoleum along with his own father al-Mustamsik and several siblings. Nevertheless, al-Wāthiq, despite his brief tenure and allegations of debauchery, was one of only two Abbasid caliphs interred at the mausoleum near the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa in Cairo.⁵⁶⁴

Perhaps influenced by the scandalous reports of al-'Umarī and Ibn Jamā'a, al-Suyūṭī considered the line of al-Mustakfī as the only legitimate option and consistently denounced attempts by later sultans to impose caliphs from the "rogue" line of al-Wāthiq, however briefly,

⁵⁵⁹ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:70, 126; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:2:503. See: William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382-1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes*, part 2 (Berkeley, 1957), 38.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:244; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:69; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392. The later historian al-Qaramānī claims that the sultan, as he approached death, deposed al-Wāthiq. See: *Akhhār al-duwal*, 2:210. This appears to be a favorable view of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as several historians claim that the sultan died having left al-Wāthiq in office as caliph. See: Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:474; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:1:475.

⁵⁶¹ Al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:188; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:24; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

⁵⁶² Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:70; Ibn al-Wardī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:474; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

⁵⁶³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 2:148-9. In at least one of his historical works, al-Maqrīzī confuses the date and attributes it to al-Ḥākim II. See: *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210.

⁵⁶⁴ The tomb names him "Khidr" the son of al-Mustamsik, al-Wāthiq billāh. A number of al-Wāthiq's children including his daughter Zubayda (d. 712/1312) and son Abū 'Abbās Aḥmad (d. 738/1338) are buried in the structure. For the partial inscription on the tomb of al-Wāthiq, see: Rogers, "Notice sur le lieu de sépulture des Khalifes Abbasides," 117-9, 122-3. For a listing of those interred in the tomb, see: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 126.

as moves of an anti-caliphate. For the next century the descendants of al-Wāthiq were often pitted as rivals against the descendants of al-Mustakfi.⁵⁶⁵

**The Abbasid Caliphate and the Later Qalawunids:
Al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh II (741-53/1341-52)
and al-Mu‘taḍid billāh (753-63/1352-62)**

Modern historians have noted the complex amiral politics which complicated the forty years of nominal rule by the sons and grandsons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the *de facto* rulers who emerged from the ranks of his former amirs.⁵⁶⁶ Such amirs often lacked widespread support and were instead compelled to rule as regent *atābaks* of the reigning Qalawunid sultan, often a minor.⁵⁶⁷ This pretense appears to have been a concession both to Qalawunid prestige and Abbasid legitimacy. At this point, the leading amir’s duty was to protect and serve the figurehead sultan, who in theory, supported and derived legitimacy from the figurehead caliph. In his estimation of the 90-year Qalawunid period, William Brinner observed that “the sultan was as much of a shadow ruler or puppet figure as was the caliph,” which, in part, helped enable a kind of equilibrium between rival Mamluk factions and furnished them with symbols of universal legitimation.⁵⁶⁸

Pressed by the need for a new sultan to mask the rivalries among amirs jostling for true power, settling the caliphate question became increasingly important in the wake of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s death. Investing the former sultan’s chosen successor Abū Bakr as the next sultan required a caliph acceptable to the ‘*ulamā*’ and capable of underwriting the regime’s Islamic legitimacy. Members of the religious elite had made it clear that caliphal designation from al-Wāthiq was objectionable because his receipt of the office had been faulty and without true right.⁵⁶⁹ Nevertheless, formal recognition of Aḥmad as al-Ḥākim II did not occur until at least 21

⁵⁶⁵ Garcin, interpreting al-Suyūṭī, suggested that al-Wāthiq’s main fault was not his alleged wrongdoing, but rather instead that he had not been selected by his predecessor and lacked the strength of forty witnesses and support of the ‘*ulamā*’ enjoyed by his rival. See: “Histoire,” 57.

⁵⁶⁶ Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 125; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 121-9; Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria,” 254. For a recent study of the period see: Jo Van Steenberg, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341-1382* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). On the early rule of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s amirs, see: Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 60-72.

⁵⁶⁷ For analysis on this phenomenon during the Qalawunid period, see: Jo Van Steenberg, “‘Is Anyone My Guardian...?’ Mamlūk Under-age Rule and the Later Qalāwūnids,” *Al-Masāq* 19, no. 1 (2007): 55-65.

⁵⁶⁸ William Brinner, “The Struggle for Power in the Mamluk State: Some Reflections on the Transition from Bahri to Burji Rule,” *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 4-10 January 1964* (New Delhi, 1970), 232, 234. According to Broadbridge, even though the Abbasid caliphate persisted as an important legitimating figurehead under the Qalawunids, understandings of kingship in this period were based mostly on ideas of Qalawunid dynastic legitimacy. See: *Kingship and Ideology*, 146-9, 167.

⁵⁶⁹ Al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:126.

Dhū al-Ḥijja 741/7 June 1341, coinciding with al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr's accession to the sultanate.⁵⁷⁰

In the wake of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's passing, the amir Qawṣūn emerged as commander-in-chief of the armies (*atābak al-'asākir*) and held real power.⁵⁷¹ Representatives of the regime summoned the rival Abbasid cousins to plead their respective cases before the court of the new sultan.⁵⁷² Playing his part, al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr asked which cousin held legal right to the caliphate. 'Izz al-Dīn ibn Jamā'a, again acting as interlocutor for the '*ulamā'*', came forward to declare the legality of al-Ḥākim's designation, the confirmation of which had formally been received from the qadi of Qūṣ.⁵⁷³ He turned to al-Wāthiq, and informed him that the caliphal office had been a temporary gift bestowed to him by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and that the late sultan's son al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr requested its return. Indignant, al-Wāthiq claimed seniority and demanded to know why the new sultan wished to grant the caliphate to his younger cousin. Representatives of the religious establishment took the opportunity to set the record straight: "It is our opinion that your caliphate has been disorderly. You have no possessions so we have stripped you of [office]. The caliphate (rightfully) belonged to Sulaymān [al-Mustakfī] and he delegated it to his son Aḥmad [al-Ḥākim II]. You may only ask the sultan for his mercy that he continue to provide you with your salary (*ma'lūm*)!"⁵⁷⁴

Satisfied by the stronger claim of al-Ḥākim II which enjoyed the support of the Cairene '*ulamā'*', al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr and the amirs followed by the qadis and other attending Mamluk

⁵⁷⁰ Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 224; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 378; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:552; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:159; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:244. Al-Suyūṭī provides two dates for state ceremonial around the investiture of al-Ḥākim II: a meeting (or possible hearing to decide the caliphate question) held on 11 Dhū al-Ḥijja 741/28 May 1341 (*Husn*, 2:69) and a more formal *bay'a* for the caliph on 1 Muḥarram 742/17 June 1341 (*Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392). The chronology of events appears to be disputed in Mamluk sources. Some historians contend that al-Wāthiq remained caliph until Kujuk became sultan under the tutelage of Qawṣūn in 742/1341-2: al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:220; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234.

⁵⁷¹ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:149-98; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:220. On the position of the *atābak al-'asākir*, see: Holt, "Structure of Government," 54-5; Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 27. On the period of control by Qawṣūn, see: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 125-9; Levani, *Turning Point*, 80-5; Jo Van Steenberghe, The amīr Qawṣūn: Statesman or Courtier ? (720-741 AH/1320 - 1341 AD) *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 102 (2001): 449-66; idem, "Caught between Heredity and Merit: Qawṣūn (d. 1342) and the legacy of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (d. 1341)," [in press].

⁵⁷² Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 224-5; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 378; al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:126; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:552; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. Adnan Darwish (Damascus, 1994), 2:135-6; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:159; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234.

⁵⁷³ Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 225; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 378; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:552; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:244; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234.

⁵⁷⁴ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:126-7. Based on the account of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, the real cause of the dispute over al-Wāthiq, from the point of view of the religious establishment, was that the caliph had no real legal right to his office. This appeared to be more troubling than allegations of the caliph's bad behavior emphasized by al-'Umarī and subsequently adopted by al-Suyūṭī. See: *Ta'rīkh*, 2:135-6.

grandeess formally deposed al-Wāthiq and pledged allegiance to the “true heir” of al-Mustakfī.⁵⁷⁵ In contrast with some later Qalawunids, the sultanic investiture ceremony of al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr was a grand event covered in great detail.⁵⁷⁶

On 2 Muḥarram 742/18 June 1341, al-Ḥākim II attended the monthly session at the Palace of Justice (*Dār al-‘Adl*) in the citadel.⁵⁷⁷ Dressed in a green robe and a black turban with a train embroidered with golden stripes, the caliph sat on the third step in front of the sultan’s throne and stood up with the four chief judges and amirs when the sultan entered.⁵⁷⁸ To display his own deference and respect for the Commander of the Faithful, al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr symbolically sat one step below the caliph.⁵⁷⁹ Al-Ḥākim recited verses from the Qur’ān which referenced oath taking (16:92 and 48:10) and delivered a sermon enjoining the young sultan to be kind to his subjects, rule justly, and make the signs of Islam manifest in his realm. The caliph then turned to Abū Bakr and announced: “I have delegated to you jurisdiction over all the Muslims, and invested you with that which I have been invested in matters of the faith.”⁵⁸⁰

The caliph draped the sultan in a black robe and decorated him with an Arabian sword.⁵⁸¹ Al-‘Umarī, thrilled by al-Wāthiq’s ouster, composed the text of the new caliphal diploma and read it aloud before presenting it to al-Ḥākim II, who signed it as “Aḥmad the son of the uncle of

⁵⁷⁵ Al-Fākhirī, *Beiträge*, 225; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-Fākhirī*, 378; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:948, 973; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:552; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:69; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:487.

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:242-3; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:558-9; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:136, 201, 204; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 1:552-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* 10:4-5; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:244; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392.

⁵⁷⁷ Al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:188; al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:130; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:191; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:24; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:558-9; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:201; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:4-5; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234; Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut, 1995), 1:65-6; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:80; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:487. This second event in Muḥarram 742/June-July 1341, according to Ibn al-Wardī, was the ceremony in which the caliph gave *bay’a* to Abū Bakr as sultan. See: *Ta’rīkh*, 2:474.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid. The strategic placement of the caliph may have been an attempt to raise the honor of the caliphate after the unpopular reign of al-Wāthiq, and to inform the citadel elite that the caliphate was again an interminable font of legitimacy for the Mamluk court, despite the later attitude of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. See: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 84.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:359-60; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:191; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:559; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:4-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:80-1. For the abridged investiture deed of al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr, see: al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:127. See also: Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxiii-xxiv; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 83-4; Holt, “Position and Power,” 244.

⁵⁸¹ Al-Shujā’ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:130; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:191; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:559; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:80.

the Prophet.”⁵⁸² It was then notarized by the qadis who proceeded to offer their *bay‘a* to the caliph and sultan before all adjourned to attend a sumptuous banquet.⁵⁸³

Though al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr proved little more than a figurehead sultan, al-Suyūṭī considered him “a restorer of order” to the Abbasid family after the shame and scandal of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reign.⁵⁸⁴ The caliph’s family returned to its respected position in Cairo, sequestered in a stately dwelling, while the name of the caliph, although without actual power, was again briefly restored to the Friday sermons.⁵⁸⁵

The rivalry among al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s former amirs ensured Abū Bakr a brief time in power.⁵⁸⁶ Three weeks into his reign, the amir Qawṣūn overpowered his chief rival Bashtāk and instead installed another son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the unassuming child Kujuk, leaving Qawṣūn sultan in all but name. An older brother of Kujuk, Aḥmad, had grown to young adulthood in al-Karak thereby escaping the clutches of Qawṣūn and his partisans. Ultimately overthrown by factional strife in Cairo, Qawṣūn and Kujuk were swept away, and the remaining amirs, once in power, welcomed Aḥmad to the sultanate.⁵⁸⁷

On 10 Shawwāl 742/19 March 1342, the important amirs ascended the citadel and prepared to install Aḥmad as sultan. Mamluk officials dressed Aḥmad in the traditional black honorary robe of the caliph, a green *farjiyya* robe, a strip from the Ka‘ba’s decorative cover (*kiswa*) and a black “lighter” turban (*takhfīfa*).⁵⁸⁸ With a bedouin sword hung upon him, the young sultan was mounted and escorted to the Columned Hall (*Qā‘a al-‘Awāmīd*), in which he ascended his throne and awaited the caliph as the amirs kissed his hands and the ground at his

⁵⁸² Al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:126; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:276-7; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:559; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:201. Two documents appear to be associated with this event, the longer form of the mutual pledge (*mubāya‘a*): al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392-9 and the investiture deed for al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr: al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:127-9. Both, which were likely composed by al-‘Umarī, concern the caliph’s designation of authority to the sultan and are further discussed in Chapter 5.

⁵⁸³ Al-‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 15:360; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:276-7; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:559; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:4-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:70.

⁵⁸⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392.

⁵⁸⁵ Of al-Ḥākim II, Ibn Taghrībirdī said “nothing was left to him from the caliphate besides [its] title.” See: *Manhal*, 1:308. Although al-Qalqashandī mentions that mosques prayed for the caliph, he incorrectly states that he remained caliph for over a year following the death of his father before the reign of al-Wāthiq billāh. See: *Ma‘āthir*, 2:145-6, 148-9.

⁵⁸⁶ Al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr was ultimately exiled to Qūṣ, the site of al-Mustakfī’s exile, which many historians interpreted as divine justice served to the Qalawunid sultans because of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s meddling with the caliphate. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:570; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:206; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 2:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:68; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 399; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:2:489.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:21-2, 42-59; Holt, *Age of Crusades*, 121-2.

⁵⁸⁸ On the disappearance of the popular *takhfīfa* hats in favor of the more ecclesiastical-style *‘imāma* turbans at the end of the Mamluk period, see: David Ayalon, “Mamlūk Military Aristocracy during the First Years of the Ottoman Occupation of Egypt,” in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, Charles Issawi, Roger Savory and A. L. Udovitch (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 415.

feet. Prominent Egyptian and Syrian qadis likewise paid their respects to Aḥmad before al-Ḥākim II entered, “dressed in a black caliphal robe of honor and a black head shawl (*ṭarḥa*) as was the custom of the caliph. He climbed up and sat near the sultan on his throne. [After the entrance of the four chief qadis and several high-ranking amirs...] the caliph gave the sultan sovereignty (*al-mulk*) [...] and testified [to having completed the act]. Then the caliph and qadis descended.”⁵⁸⁹

This episode marks a noteworthy moment in Mamluk caliphal ritual, in that most chroniclers only mention that the caliph pledged *bay‘a* to the sultan without receiving *bay‘a* himself, which, according to some modern scholars, perhaps signifies an important break with tradition since the time of Baybars.⁵⁹⁰ With the accession of al-Nāṣir Aḥmad in 742/1342, the amirs had reconfigured caliphal ceremonial, turning the tables so that the Abbasid caliph, mirroring the *tafwīd* or delegation clause of many Mamluk investiture deeds, pledged his allegiance and authority to the sultan.⁵⁹¹

After investing the new sultan, al-Ḥākim II briefly became entangled in political drama. Aḥmad failed to be the malleable candidate the amirs had expected; rather he proved authoritative and curt, favoring the entourage he had brought from al-Karak at the expense of the amirs who had invited him. When tensions reached the tipping point, Aḥmad fled Cairo, taking the Abbasid caliph and key members of the bureaucratic administration with him to re-establish his base in al-Karak.⁵⁹² Egypt remained in the care of a deputy as Aḥmad prepared his comeback hoping to be free of interference from his father’s amirs. To protect his fledgling regime, Aḥmad forwarded much of the treasury to al-Karak with a huge retinue. He likewise sent al-Ḥākim II to Palestine in Dhū al-Ḥijja 742/May 1342, presumably to station him at one of two holy cities, Jerusalem or Hebron, to better preserve the caliph from the hands of his rivals.⁵⁹³ The amirs of Cairo retaliated by replacing him with his brother Ismā‘īl as al-Šāliḥ (without the presence of the caliph) followed by expeditions sent against al-Karak until Aḥmad was defeated.⁵⁹⁴ Early the next year in Šafar

⁵⁸⁹ Al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:204-5; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:200; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:603; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:59-61. On the various items of the caliph’s dress, see: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 58; L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 13-4; Carl F. Petry, “Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt: Hallowed Traditions, Shifting Protocols,” in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York, 2001), 363; Albrecht Fuess, “Sultans with Horns: The Political Significance of Headgear in the Mamluk Empire,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 75-6.

⁵⁹⁰ Holt, “Structure of Government,” 45; idem, “Some Observations,” 504. It is unclear how this “break” came about. It may have been a momentary political exigency that ultimately became set in stone.

⁵⁹¹ See my discussion in Chapter 5.

⁵⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:609; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:246-51; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:67-8.

⁵⁹³ Al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:217, 224; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:953; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:609-10; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 62; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:247, 295; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:67. See also: Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 129.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:299; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:70-2, 78-81.

743/July 1342, the caliph returned to Cairo, escorted through Gaza by several amirs.⁵⁹⁵ Al-Ḥākim II later joined the four qadis to participate in the state's public deposition of Aḥmad in absentia.

Overall, political conditions inclined towards the betterment of the Abbasid family at large. For example, the caliph apparently enjoyed influence enough to advance the interests and careers of his brothers and half-brothers in the Mamluk government.⁵⁹⁶ In the atmosphere of uncertainty, the ruling amirs may well have considered it politic to shore up the interests of the Abbasid family, whose financial well-being had likewise remained a concern. In Cairo the Abbasids had been permitted to collect some income from a non-specific levy placed on goldsmiths, although the amount was precarious and oftentimes scarcely sufficient to feed the now sizeable household.⁵⁹⁷ In Qūṣ, the family's resources had been strained after increasingly severe cuts to the caliphal pension, though after their return to Cairo, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had restored the monthly pension for al-Wāthiq, which the former caliph had retained even after deposition. The administration of al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr likewise allotted amounts of cash and kind for the household of al-Ḥākim II.⁵⁹⁸

Important financial relief may have come as early as Shawwāl 742/April 1342 following the caliph's investiture of al-Nāṣir Aḥmad.⁵⁹⁹ After several years of supervision by various notables, Mamluk authorities placed directorship (*naẓar*) of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa in the hands of al-Ḥākim II, a deed some sources attributed to the piety of sultan Aḥmad.⁶⁰⁰ Pilgrims' donations, votive offerings (*nudhūr*) to the shrine, and revenue from the Abbasid family monopoly on the sale of donated candles and oil brought a significant source of income unencumbered by the Mamluk state. Each month the caliph or his delegate emptied donations

⁵⁹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:620-1; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:301; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:80; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:498.

⁵⁹⁶ This is an intriguing claim, though the sources which I examined provide no further details. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

⁵⁹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:785. See also: Rāgib, "Sayyida Nafīsa," 41-2; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 54-5.

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:126.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:28 (6 Shawwāl); Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:495 (10 Shawwāl).

⁶⁰⁰ The shrine was most likely assigned to the Abbasid family shortly after the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. However, al-Qalqashandī claims that before his death, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed al-Ḥākim II (whom he identifies as al-Musta'ṣim) as administrator of the shrine. See: *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:609, 3:1:76; Ibn Taghrībirdī *Nujūm*, 10:66; Rāgib, "Sayyida Nafīsa," 41-2. Elsewhere, al-Maqrīzī writes that al-Mu'taḍid was appointed as overseer of the shrine but does not indicate if he was the first or second Cairo caliph appointed. See: *Sulūk*, 3:1:76; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210. Al-Suyūṭī writes that al-Mu'taḍid II "was attached to" shrine management (*dumma ilayhi naẓar al-mashhad*). See: *Husn*, 2:81; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 60; Tetsuya, "Cairene Cemeteries," 101-2. For use of the shrine in previous years under the Mamluks as well as comments on the history of the structure in Mamluk practice, see: al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 2:385; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4:2:837-43; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245.

from a large trunk at the head of the tomb.⁶⁰¹ In the view of the masses, moreover, Abbasid affiliation with the shrine provided a link between two significant lines of the Prophet's family: his direct offspring through his daughter Fāṭima and cousin 'Alī, and the offspring of his uncle al-'Abbās.⁶⁰² While there was no formal or regular contact between the caliphs and the masses, sporadic interaction took place at the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa. Thus, through direct association with a well-attended religious landmark, the public profile of the Abbasid caliph enjoyed increased prominence, making the caliphs slightly more accessible to the masses after the earlier sultans had expended significant efforts to isolate them.⁶⁰³ While sanctifying the place of pilgrimage with his own holy presence, we may speculate that the caliph also simultaneously tapped into the world of folk religion, popular culture, and pietism in medieval Cairo that must have further endeared him to the 'āmma and potentially provided him with an entry point into their world.⁶⁰⁴ The Abbasids also received a residence near the Nafīsī shrine, an area deemed sufficiently holy and suitable for caliphs.⁶⁰⁵

As had been the case with his recent ancestors, the caliph's scholarly credentials remained a concern to Mamluk authorities. Al-Ḥākim II received training in Islamic sciences, notably as a traditionist (*muḥaddith*). Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī attested to the caliph's authorization to narrate prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*) after studying with various noteworthy latter day ḥadīth scholars.⁶⁰⁶ Various 'ulamā' and well-wishers visited the Commander of the Faithful at his abode and received generous gifts from their host.⁶⁰⁷ The ability to reward his support-base may have been a sign of the caliph's increased income. In many ways, al-Ḥākim typified an ideal caliph for the regime's expectations of the office; a diplomatic, humble, and even submissive personality devoted to study and quiet prayer for the perpetuation of the government and its ruling class.⁶⁰⁸

The Mamluk sultanate may well have been in need of prayer during the ten-year reign of al-Ḥākim II, as the caliph invested no fewer than seven of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's sons with the

⁶⁰¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Sulūk*, 3:1:76; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:1:587-8, 5:192. See also: Rāgib, "Sayyida Nafīsa," 42; Tetsuya, "Cairene Cemeteries," 102.

⁶⁰² Jean-Claude Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 303.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. For popular culture in Cairo (religious and otherwise), see: Little, "Religion under the Mamluks," 165-81; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 1-8; Thomas Herzog, "Mamluk (Popular) Culture: the State of Research," in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 131-58.

⁶⁰⁵ Tetsuya, "Cairene Cemeteries," 101.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:38; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:159; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 399; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234.

⁶⁰⁷ *Masālik al-Absār* excerpt quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

⁶⁰⁸ On the expectations for the caliphal office holders based on deeds of investiture, see Chapter 5.

sultanate. Mamluk sources regularly mention the caliph's involvement in sultanic investiture ceremonies for each new Qalawunid sultan.⁶⁰⁹ The true power holders behind the regime requested the caliph's presence for many investiture ceremonies and his official obligations included little else. The caliph witnessed many of their coronations: al-Manṣūr Abu Bakr⁶¹⁰ (741-2/1341), al-Ashraf Kujuk⁶¹¹ (742/1341), al-Nāṣir Aḥmad⁶¹² (742/1342), al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl⁶¹³ (743-6/1342-5), al-Kāmil Sha'bān⁶¹⁴ (746-7/1346-7), al-Muẓaffar Hājji⁶¹⁵ (747-8/1346-7), al-Nāṣir Ḥasan⁶¹⁶ (748-52/1347-51), and al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ⁶¹⁷ (752-5/1351-4). Al-Maqrīzī described fourteenth century investiture practices among the Qalawunids which involved the ceremonial participation of the Abbasid caliph and the qadis:

It was also a custom that whenever a descendant of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Kalavun succeeded to the kingdom that the amirs would attend at his residence in the Citadel, and he would be invested with the black caliphal robe with a green gown underneath and a round black turban. He would be girded with the golden Arab sword, and, mounting the royal steed, he would proceed with the amirs before him, and with the saddle-cover in front, while the criers shouted and the royal flutes were blown; the halberdiers escorting him as he passed from Bāb al-Nuḥās to the steps of this hall [i.e. the Palace of Justice]. Then he would dismount, go up to the throne, and take his seat on it; and the amirs would kiss the ground before him. Then they would approach him, and kiss his hand in order of precedence, then the commanders of the *Ḥalqa*. When they had finished, the judges and caliph would attend. Robes of honour would be conferred on the caliph. He would sit with the sultan on the throne, and invest the sultan with the kingdom in the presence of the judges and the amirs as witnesses. Then he and the judges would depart, and a banquet would be held for the amirs. When they had all finished eating, the sultan would rise and go to his private apartment and the amirs would depart.⁶¹⁸

⁶⁰⁹ In most cases, Mamluk sources depict it as the caliph offering *bay'a* to the sultan. See: Holt, "Some Observations," 504.

⁶¹⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:17; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:4-5.

⁶¹¹ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:26; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:16. The sultanate of Abū Bakr lasted only 59 days until 19 Ṣafar 742/4 August 1341, when the amirs ordered the accession of his brother Kujuk.

⁶¹² Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:27; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:60. The caliph gave Aḥmad *bay'a* for the sultanate. Aḥmad later gave al-Ḥākim II the stewardship over the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa after the removal of the amir Ibn al-Qaṣṭalānī from the position so that he could accompany the sultan to al-Karak. See: *Nujūm*, 10:66.

⁶¹³ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:40.

⁶¹⁴ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:80; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:681; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:117; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:111. The amirs wanted to replace Ismā'īl who fell ill and selected Sha'bān who on 8 Rabī' I 746/9 July 1345 presided over the *Dār al-'Adl* and received caliphal investiture before robing the caliph and qadis. The caliph's testament was renewed for Sha'bān.

⁶¹⁵ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:92; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:714; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:149; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:132. There is no explicit mention of the *bay'a*; the caliph and qadis merely observed as the amirs engaged in ceremonial.

⁶¹⁶ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:102; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:155.

⁶¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:843; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:148; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:254; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:216. Most sources state that Mamluk authorities summoned the caliph and other functionaries at the time of coronation, but fail to provide further details about his role in the investiture.

⁶¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:668; English translation by Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 142.

The amirs competing for power demonstrated their keenness towards fidelity for customs established by well-remembered earlier sultans. In times of greatest instability, the caliphate could provide legitimacy from a universal Islamic source alongside the increasingly important link to the family of Qalāwūn.

Beyond participation in state functions Mamluk sources mention little about al-Ḥākim II. The caliph remained, however, an attraction for important trading partners, notably India.⁶¹⁹ As it had during the Baghdad period of the Abbasid caliphate, an investiture contracted through the caliph of Cairo secured local legitimacy for distant rulers and cemented goodwill with an important trading partner or strategic ally.

The reign of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (748-52/1347-51) witnessed a fierce outbreak of plague in Ramaḍān 748/December 1347 and with it, demonstrations of the powerful symbolic and spiritual protection on offer from the Abbasid caliphate. Early in the month the Mamluk elite received orders to gather outside Cairo at the Dome of Victory (*Qubbat al-Naṣr*) clutching copies of the Qurʾān and joined by the *ʿamma*.⁶²⁰

By mid-753/1352 al-Ḥākim II himself joined the estimated one third of the population of Egypt and Syria who lost their lives to the Black Death (*tāʾūn*, or bubonic plague).⁶²¹ It remains

⁶¹⁹ In 744/1343-4 the ruler of India sent gifts and jewels to Cairo and appealed to the good will of the Mamluk sultan stating that his rule was incomplete without the divine election (*wilāya*) facilitated by the caliph. The sultan summoned the caliph, told him of the request, and the Mamluk chancery drew up a *taqlīd* to send back with the return delegation. See: al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:257-8; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:645; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:364. For commentary on the relations between the Abbasids of Cairo and the Indian rulers of Delhi and elsewhere, see: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 107-20; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 97-100; Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 108-16; Inās Ḥamdī Surūr, *Fī tāʾrīkh wa-ḥaḍārat al-Islām fī al-Hind: mundhu awākhir al-qarn al-sādis al-hijrī/awāʾil al-qarn al-thālith ʿashr al-Milādī hattā muntaṣaf al-qarn al-ʿāshir al-hijrī/awāʾil al-qarn al-sādis ʿashr al-milādī* (Alexandria: Dār al-Maʿrifā al-Jāmiʿiyya, 2013), 53-7; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 9; Yāsir ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Mashhadānī, *al-ʿAlqāt al-Miṣriyya-al-Hindiyya fī al-ʿaṣr al-mamlūkī: dirāsa fī al-jawānib al-siyāsiyya wa-al-ḥaḍāriyya* (Egypt: al-Maktab al-ʿArabī lil-Maʿārif, 2015), 46-56.

⁶²⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:204.

⁶²¹ Inconsistency in the sources confounds the precise year of al-Ḥākim II's death. Several historians confused the year of his death with that of al-Wāthiq in Shaʿbān 748/November 1347: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 2:149; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245; Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ʿalā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*, ed. Ḥasan Ismāʿīl Marwa (Beirut, 1992), 1:130. In both of his biographical dictionaries al-Ṣafadī gives Dhū al-Ḥijja 749/February-March 1349 as the caliph's date of death. See: *Aʾyān*, 1:221; idem, *Wāfi*, 30:104. Other historians place the caliph's death in 753/1352-3: Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 1:159; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 3:38; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 1:309; al-Suyūfī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 399; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:233-4. Others still record 754/1353-4: Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 190-1; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:65-6; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:548. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 84. Disagreement has also resulted in confusion as to whether the caliphate of al-Ḥākim's successor al-Muʿtaḍid had been thirteen years (749-63/1348-62) or ten years (753-63/1352-62). Al-Sakhāwī

unclear whether the caliph named his successor.⁶²² The dominant amir Shaykhū al-‘Umarī al-Nāṣirī held a tribunal of the most powerful amirs, qadis, and Abbasid representatives in the court of the Qalawunid sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (752-5/1351-4) to select the next Abbasid to be raised to the caliphate.⁶²³ Ultimately, the triumvirate of Shaykhū, Ṭāz, and Ṣarghitmish selected another son of al-Mustakfī, Abū Bakr Abū al-Faṭḥ, and drew up a covenant in order to pledge loyalty to him as al-Mu‘taḍid billāh on 17 Sha‘bān 753/28 September 1352.⁶²⁴ The new caliph also received his brother’s position as overseer and chief financial beneficiary at the tomb of Sayyida Nafīsa.⁶²⁵ After the ceremony a grand procession of qadis and other notables, escorted the caliph from the citadel to his residence.⁶²⁶ Perhaps confident in the brief stability they presided over, the ruling amirs permitted al-Mu‘taḍid, a man in his sixties, to perform the pilgrimage to the holy cities of the Hījāz at least twice, in 754/1353 and 760/1359, though few details of his escort are known.⁶²⁷

Mamluk sources mention little beyond the caliph’s interaction with scholars and an apparent speech impediment that prevented him from accurately pronouncing the Arabic letter *kāf*.⁶²⁸ Al-Mu‘taḍid studied ḥadīth with al-‘Izz ibn al-Ḍiyā’ al-Ḥamawī who spoke highly of the

acknowledged the confusion and attempted to set the record straight that the caliphate of al-Mu‘taḍid had indeed been only ten years, placing al-Ḥākim’s death in 753/1352. See: *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:123.

⁶²² On this point Mamluk historians are likewise split between those who say the caliph *did* name his successor, or at the very least issued a covenant (‘*ahd*’) naming al-Mu‘taḍid his heir: Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:948, 973; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 190; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:517; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:119; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:66; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 400; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234; while other historians claim he did not: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:284, 290; idem, *Manhal*, 1:309; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245. Elsewhere, al-Suyūṭī reverses his position and states that al-Ḥākim II left no ‘*ahd*’ and the ruling amirs decided on the caliphal successor. See: *Husn*, 2:81. Al-Qalqashandī merely reports that the caliph received *bay‘a* after the death of his brother. See: *Ma‘āthir*, 2:154-5.

⁶²³ Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 190; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:284, 291; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245-6; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:66; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:548.

⁶²⁴ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 10:235, 30:148-9; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 190-1; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:529; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:284, 290-291; idem, *Manhal*, 1:309; idem, Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:245-7; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 400; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:235. Al-Qalqashandī incorrectly places it in 748 (*Ma‘āthir*, 2:155), while al-Sakhāwī, following Ibn Kathīr, dates al-Mu‘taḍid’s accession in 752-3 (*Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:130; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:56, 66, 122-3). Al-Suyūṭī claims al-Mu‘taḍid died on 10 Jumādā I 763/7 March 1362. See: *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 400. For a general character assessment of the caliph, see: al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:548-9. According to the later historian al-Qaramānī, al-Mu‘taḍid’s mother was likely a concubine named Jawhar. See: *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:212.

⁶²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81.

⁶²⁶ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:235; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:549.

⁶²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:903, 3:1:77; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:47; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:257, 340; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:119, 134; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:56, 70, 123. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that Ibn Kathīr cited al-Mu‘taḍid as the reigning caliph in 752/1351 and claims that factional tumult in Cairo forced him to return quickly from the pilgrimage that year. See: *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:56.

⁶²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:77; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:517; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:529; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:212.

Commander of the Faithful.⁶²⁹ Other admirers included Badr al-Dīn ibn Habīb and Ismā‘īl ibn Kathīr, who collectively described the caliph as a brown-complexioned man, who, despite his pockmarked skin was pleasing to look upon. Overall, historians describe the caliph as a good-natured, knowledgeable, and magnanimous fellow who spoke in kindnesses and was quick to understand.⁶³⁰

Factional struggles plagued Mamluk politics during much of al-Mu‘taḍid’s caliphate, and the amirs frequently summoned him to engage in the ceremonial robing and *mubāya‘a* for each new sultan. The caliph’s reign witnessed the inauguration of the second reign of sultan Ḥasan (755-62/1354-61)⁶³¹ and after that sultan’s murder, the investiture of his successor al-Manṣūr Muḥammad (762-4/1361-3). Like his predecessors, al-Mu‘taḍid attended the ceremonies to bestow sultans with “the caliphal honor” (*al-tashrīf al-khalīfatī*) which often included black Abbasid robes.⁶³²

Some months after a failed 752/1351 revolt in Syria by the deputy of Aleppo, Baybughā Rūs, who sought to name himself sultan in Damascus, the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid and the qadis arrived in Sha‘bān 753/September 1352 to help restore order.⁶³³ At the Dammāghīyya madrasa, the caliph hobnobbed with local ‘*ulamā*’, notably receiving, honoring, and briefly reading a portion of a Ḥanbalī volume of ḥadīth literature with the Damascene scholar and Qur’ān exegete, Ibn Kathīr.⁶³⁴ Having set affairs straight in Syria, the sultan’s forces returned to Cairo amidst a massive celebration.⁶³⁵

⁶²⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz*, 1:123.

⁶³⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:245; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 191-2; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:517; Ibn Hajar, *Durar al-kāminā*, 1:529; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:126-7, 130, 188; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:123; al-Suyūfī, *Husn*, 2:81; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 400; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:212.

⁶³¹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:139.

⁶³² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:3; Surūr, *Dawlat*, 85.

⁶³³ Mamluk sources remain vague regarding the identity of the caliph that accompanied the sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ (752-5/1351-4) in Sha‘bān 753/September 1352 when he rode out to Syria to deal with a group of recalcitrant deputies on the verge of revolt. Because this event occurred in proximity to the disputed death date of al-Ḥākim II, Mamluk sources are sometimes ambiguous concerning which Abbasid caliph accompanied al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ’s mission. Ibn Khaldūn (*Ta’rīkh*, 5:450) claimed al-Mu‘taḍid had gone to Syria but Surūr points out that al-Ṣāliḥ journeyed there the year before al-Mu‘taḍid’s *bay‘a*. See: *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 84. See also: al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 30:149; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:478-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:1:541-2. Al-Malaṭī states that al-Ḥākim died in Jumādā II 753/July 1352 and places al-Ṣāliḥ’s journey to Syria in Sha‘bān of that year (September 1352). See: *Nayl al-amal*, 1:238. Al-Sakhāwī again tries to have the last word on the matter by stating that al-Mu‘taḍid had twice gone to Syria, once with al-Ṣāliḥ and once with al-Manṣūr Muḥammad. See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:124-5, 188; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:123. On the rebellion of Baybughā see: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:244-5; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:966-7; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:3:869-74; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:272-80; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:124-7; idem, *Wajīz*, 1:60-3; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:208, 211-2; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:1:536, 539; Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 138-40; Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 136, 192.

⁶³⁴ Ibn Kathīr wrote fondly of his encounter with al-Mu‘taḍid, blessing the caliph’s ancestors after observing that “he was a young man [with a] handsome face, eloquent, humble, of good understanding,

By Shawwāl 755/October 1354 the amirs ultimately forced al-Ṣāliḥ Ṣāliḥ into exile and returned al-Nāṣir Ḥasan to power for a second time (755-62/1354-61) after a ceremony involving al-Mu‘taḍid and the qadis.⁶³⁶ The amir Shaykhū acted as *atābak* until his murder at court in 758/1357.⁶³⁷ Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan ruled successfully in his own name until he in turn was deposed and executed in 762/1361-2.⁶³⁸ The first grandson of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, al-Manṣūr Muḥammad was elevated in the absence of any surviving uncles, invested by the caliph and qadis and dressed in a caliphal robe on 9 Jumādā I 762/17 March 1361.⁶³⁹ The next strongman to emerge among the amirs was Yalbughā al-‘Umarī al-Khāṣṣakī, a former mamlūk of the late sultan Ḥasan, who, in turn, enjoyed influence for eight years until his murder in 768/1366.⁶⁴⁰

In relative comparison with their father al-Mustakfī and grandfather al-Ḥākim, the Abbasid brothers al-Ḥākim II and al-Mu‘taḍid maintained a low profile and refrained from affairs of state while the amirs manipulated the Qalawunid legacy and reigned political havoc in their quest for power. Both caliphs performed ceremonial duties, but avoided court intrigue, immersing themselves in religious studies and engagement with the scholarly class.⁶⁴¹ The caliphs were prominent members of the religious culture and their traditional place in Islamic history transformed their mere presence into a thing of prestige and nobility. With the eclipse of the Mongols after the death of the last major Ilkhanid Abū Sa‘īd in 736/1335, the caliphate faded from foreign relations rhetoric, save for messages sent to Cairo from rulers abroad seeking caliphal sanction and investiture.

Al-Mu‘taḍid, shortly before his death on 10 Jumādā I 763/March 1362,⁶⁴² contracted the caliphate to his son Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad, who began his reign at age twenty-three as al-

who had a way with words.” See: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:245; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:126, 188; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:130; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:62-3, 123. See also: Henri Laoust, “Ibn Kathīr,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3:818.

⁶³⁵ The celebration took place on 7 Sha‘bān 753/18 September 1352.

⁶³⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:1; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:302; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:76; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:1:552-3.

⁶³⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:33-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:324-5.

⁶³⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:62; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:4-5.

⁶³⁹ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 30:149; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:64-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:3.

⁶⁴⁰ Walī al-Dīn ibn al-‘Irāqī, *al-Dhayl ‘alā al-‘ibar fī khabar man ‘abar*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Mahdī ‘Abbās (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, 1989), 1:50-1, 216. For a recent reconsideration of the career of Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, see: Jo Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, the Qalāwūnid Sultanate, and the Cultural Matrix of Mamlūk Society: A Reassessment of Mamlūk Politics in the 1360s,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131, no. 3 (2011): 423-43; idem, “On the Brink of a New Era? Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī (d. 1366) and the Yalbughāwīyah,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 117-52.

⁶⁴¹ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340.

⁶⁴² Mamluk sources again dispute the death date of al-Mu‘taḍid. Ibn al-‘Irāqī (*Dhayl*, 1:97) notes that there were at least two competing dates: 7 Jumādā II 763 or 18 Jumādā I 763. Dates vary among other sources: Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:248 (news of the death arrived in Jumādā II); al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262 (10 Jumādā I 763); al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210 (10 Jumādā I 763); Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina*, 1:529

Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh.⁶⁴³ Mamluk sources describe al-Mu‘taḍid’s funeral as well-attended and memorable.⁶⁴⁴ Joining his cousin al-Wāthiq in interment in the Abbasid mausoleum, al-Mu‘taḍid appears to be the only other Cairo caliph buried within the structure. The inscription on his tomb is one of the more verbose epitaphs discovered in the mausoleum:

Whosoever is upon [the earth] shall perish (*man ‘alayhā fān*). Only God’s face abides possessing majesty and glory. This is the grave of one who believes in His religion, seeking the grace of his Lord, Imām al-Mu‘taḍid billāh Abū al-Faḥ Abū Bakr, Commander of the Faithful.⁶⁴⁵

Father of the Caliphs: The Long Career of al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh (763-85/1362-83 and 791-808/1389-1406)

Despite two interruptions the combined reign of al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh (763-85/1362-83 and 791-808/1389-1406) was the longest of the Cairo caliphs and witnessed the fall of the Qalawunids, the emergence of al-Zāhir Barqūq and the Circassian line of sultans as well as the horror of Mongol revival which culminated in the invasion of Syria by the Central Asian warlord Temūr (Tamerlane).⁶⁴⁶

Contemporary historians were quick to acknowledge the legacy of al-Mutawakkil of Cairo. Among the one hundred children reportedly born to the caliph’s wives and concubines, five sons and three grandsons acceded to the caliphate until the end of the Mamluk sultanate -- a

(Jumādā I 763); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:15 (18 Jumādā I 763); al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:212 (4 Jumādā I 763). However, the date of death inscribed on the caliph’s tomb in Cairo is 8 Jumādā I 763/5 March 1362. See: *RCEA*, 17, no. 763 002.

⁶⁴³ Al-Ṣafādī, *Wāfī*, 30:149; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 14:293; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 3:248; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 191, 194; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:948, 973-4; Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 1:98; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:77, 4:1:24; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:210, 3:292; Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969-98), 2:343; idem, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina: fī a’yān al-mi’a al-tāsi’a*, ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 119 (Ibn Ḥajar claims Muḥammad was born in 740/1339-40); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:6, 14-5; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:247; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:187-8 (12 Jumādā II 763); idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:123; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:339-40. Al-Maqrīzī reports that al-Mu‘taḍid died on 10 Jumādā I and al-Mutawakkil received investiture on 12 Jumādā I (*Sulūk*, 3:1:76-7). Ibn Taghrībirdī claims al-Mutawakkil received *bay’a* from his father the same day he died. Elsewhere, however, the author claims the date of the *bay’a* was 7 Jumādā II 763 (*Nujūm*, 13:155). Ibn Iyās dates the death of the caliph to the night of 18 Jumādā I 763 and the *bay’a* to his successor the next day, see: *Badā’i*, 1:1:587-8. See also: al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:213.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn*, 191; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:122.

⁶⁴⁵ Rogers, “Notice sur le lieu de sépulture des Khalifes Abbasides,” 123-4; *RCEA*, 17, no. 763 002.

⁶⁴⁶ Al-Mutawakkil was twice deposed, the first time for a fortnight in 779/1377 and later for six years (785-91/1383-9). For his biography see: al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:292-5; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:343-5; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:154-5; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:248-54; Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi’* (Cairo, 1934-6), 7:168; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:386-7; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:81-5; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 401-4; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:745-6.

feat unique both to the Abbasid dynasty and Islamic history.⁶⁴⁷ Indeed by the late fifteenth century, every surviving member of the Abbasid clan allegedly drew descent from al-Mutawakkil after the disappearance of all other lines.⁶⁴⁸

In addition to inaugurating the second century of the Abbasid restoration in Cairo, the reign of al-Mutawakkil found the caliphal household in relative affluence after accumulating a surplus of wealth and property from the Mamluk government.⁶⁴⁹ The family had feathered their nest rather well thanks in large part to the lucrative administration of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa which al-Mutawakkil ceremoniously inherited along with the family office on 7 Jumādā II 763/3 April 1362,⁶⁵⁰ although he was deprived of revenues beginning in 766/1364-5 when it was reassigned to the amir Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Baktimur until 789/1387.⁶⁵¹

The caliph’s investiture closely resembled that of his father al-Mu‘taḍid. After a summons to the citadel, Mamluk authorities seated Muḥammad ibn al-Mu‘taḍid and invested him with the caliphate, surrounded by Abbasid heraldry as important military and civilian notables looked on. Later, the new caliph descended to his residence amidst congratulatory fanfare.⁶⁵²

The early years of al-Mutawakkil’s caliphate passed without incident, his duties involving little more than the expected ceremonial investiture of Qalawunid princes.⁶⁵³ At the behest of the chief amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, the caliph confirmed the sultanate of al-Manṣūr

⁶⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:155; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:248; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 7:168; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:132; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:212. That al-Mutawakkil allegedly fathered one hundred children is a claim shared only by the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper as “Extracts from Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s Chronicle Entitled Ḥawādith ad-duhūr fī madā ‘l-ayyām wash-shuhūr,” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930-42), 237; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:746; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 63.

⁶⁴⁸ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 401; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:213.

⁶⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:132; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84.

⁶⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:76; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:248; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340; Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 7:168; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:188; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:588; Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafīsa,” 42.

⁶⁵¹ On Ibn Baktimur see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:82-3. Reassignment of the shrine caused the family some financial distress. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:100; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:368; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:123; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:17, 378. Mamluk authorities ultimately restored control of the shrine to the Abbasids in 789/1387 and it remained under family supervision (except for one minor interruption in 902/1496-7) until the Ottoman Conquest of Cairo in 923/1517. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:552; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* 11:245; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:192; Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafīsa,” 42; Tetsuya, “Cairene Cemeteries,” 102.

⁶⁵² Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340. For the succession contract issued by al-Mu‘taḍid to al-Mutawakkil, see: al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81-3.

⁶⁵³ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 7:168. Some sources date the *bay’a* ceremony to 12 Jumādā I 763/9 March 1362. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 2:167; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:340, 3:132. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the death of al-Mu‘taḍid and *bay’a* for his son took place on 18 Jumādā I 763/15 March 1362. See: *Nujūm* 11:6, 15. For details of the procession, see: Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:588.

Muḥammad ibn Ḥājī (762-4/1361-3), though al-Mutawakkil was ultimately ordered to declare the latter deposed on grounds of mental inability and instead install al-Ashraf Sha‘bān as sultan on 15 Sha‘bān 764/30 May 1363.⁶⁵⁴

The Cairo caliphate received minor interest from abroad when in Jumādā I 767/1366 the Jalayrid governor of Baghdad, Khvāja Mirjān, rebelled against his overlord Shaykh Uvays and replaced his name in the *khutba* and on coinage with that of the sultan Sha‘bān. Cairo, which had gradually come to view Shaykh Uvays as hostile, welcomed the envoys of Khvāja Mirjān, who received a Mamluk *taqlīd* of deputyship from Sha‘bān and the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil as well as caliphal standards to carry back to Baghdad.⁶⁵⁵

In Rabī‘ II 768/December 1366, Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, perhaps losing his grip on Sha‘bān and hoping to regain control through a more malleable candidate, summoned al-Mutawakkil and Ānūk, another grandson of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and asked the caliph to delegate authority in place of his brother Sha‘bān. The caliph, however, refused and argued that al-Ashraf Sha‘bān still had power (*shawka*). Unmoved by the caliph’s refusal, Yalbughā ordered the sounding of drums and the display of sultanic symbols and, according to al-Maqrīzī, remarked, “I appoint and confirm [Ānūk], and who else holds power besides me?”⁶⁵⁶ After the murder of Yalbughā at court later that year, al-Ashraf Sha‘bān succeeded in establishing his power through the acquisition of many of the *atābak al-‘asākir*’s former mamlūks. Nevertheless, Sha‘bān’s reign was hardly free of intrigue, and many of the amirs loyal to Yalbughā schemed to end his rule.⁶⁵⁷

After a relatively quiet fifteen years, al-Mutawakkil emerged from the sidelines in 778/1377 to join al-Ashraf Sha‘bān for a lavish pilgrimage journey with other notables.⁶⁵⁸ After

⁶⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:83; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:24; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:327-28 (installation), 1:349-50 (deposition); al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:131 (installation); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:1:580 (installation), 593 (deposition). Descendants of the Prophet (*sayyids*) received special recognition in the court of Sha‘bān, though it is unclear if the distinction applied to descendants of al-‘Abbās. In 773/1371-2 *sayyids* were afforded the special courtesy of wearing special green badges appended to their turbans for the first time. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 401.

⁶⁵⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:112; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:213; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:148; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:379; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:28; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 163-4. On the revolt of Khvāja Mirjān, see: Patrick Wing, “The Jalayrids and Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Ilkhante” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007), 191-5.

⁶⁵⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:134. While he was reluctant to see an amir attempt to disrupt the sultanate, the caliph could do little to prevent power going to Ānūk, who held court for only a day as al-Malik al-Manṣūr. Al-Mutawakkil’s reasons for opposing Yalbughā are unclear. See also: Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 117 note 284; idem, “On the Brink of a New Era,” 120.

⁶⁵⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:133-4; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:391-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:47.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:993; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:269-75; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:292; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:510; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:128; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:222-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 402; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 86.

the convoy crossed the Sinai Peninsula, however, the sultan's mamlūks mutinied in 'Aqaba purportedly over discontent with their pay rations. Unable to calm the situation, Sha'bān fled toward Cairo.⁶⁵⁹ Another report claimed the sultan had learned that his mamlūks, in collusion with the amirs, sought to assassinate him on the pilgrimage.⁶⁶⁰ Unbeknownst to the sultan, a separate coup by the Yalbughāwī amirs of Cairo had already removed him from power.⁶⁶¹ Al-Mutawakkil, on the other hand, lingered in 'Aqaba. The rebellious mamlūks led by the amir Ṭashtamur urged the caliph to accept the sultanate and offered their faithful assistance.⁶⁶² After some hesitation, the caliph declined and instead diplomatically offered to bestow authority on any other unanimously agreeable candidate.⁶⁶³ The caliph then proceeded to Cairo with the amirs and qadis, perhaps already having been forewarned of events there.⁶⁶⁴

In Cairo, the amirs raised a son of Sha'bān, al-Manṣūr 'Alī (778-83/1377-82), to the sultanate without the presence of the caliph or chief magistrates who had not yet returned from 'Aqaba.⁶⁶⁵ Some amirs considered selecting a surrogate caliph until al-Mutawakkil arrived.⁶⁶⁶ Shortly after Sha'bān emerged from hiding, a conspiracy of amirs (including the future sultan Barqūq) murdered the sultan in Dhū al-Qa'da 778/March-April 1377.⁶⁶⁷ After al-Mutawakkil reached Cairo that same month, the caliph attended a ceremony at which Mamluk officials instructed the caliph to read the appointment papers for the Qalawunid sultan al-Manṣūr 'Alī in the presence of the other chief religious functionaries of the regime, all of whom subsequently

⁶⁵⁹ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:117-8.

⁶⁶⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:119; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 86.

⁶⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:275-6.

⁶⁶² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:285; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:292-3; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:132, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:290-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:119-20. Ibn Iyās writes that the amirs approached al-Mutawakkil after the sultan left and said, "You are more suitable for the sultanate than anyone." See: *Badā'i'*, 1:2:183. According to Ibn al-'Irāqī after the sultan fled, the amirs asked the caliph to initiate (*yubāshir*) the sultanate. See: *Dhayl*, 2:430; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:223-4. For a source-critical and comparative analysis of the 778/1376-7 revolt against al-Ashraf Sha'bān with some bearing on the role of al-Mutawakkil, see: Massoud, *Chronicles*, 13-86 (esp. 37, 56, 80, 85, 244-6).

⁶⁶³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:88; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:223-4.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:132; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:223-4; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:184; Garcin, "Histoire," 59.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:284; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:131-2; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:148. Mamluk amirs later restaged the investiture ceremony in 77/1376-7 to include the caliph and qadis. Mamluk sources also provide details of the sultan's caliphal garb and gifts given to the caliph including one thousand dinars. See: *Sulūk*, 3:1:290; *Nujūm*, 11:148-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:192.

⁶⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:278; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:131; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 235.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:148; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:118.

received robes or honor and monetary rewards. The caliph offered *bay'a* to the sultan and draped him in a black caliphal robe.⁶⁶⁸

Al-Mutawakkil made a powerful enemy of the ringleader of the Yalbughāwī amirs who had risen against Sha'bān, the *amir akhūr* and *atābak al-'asākir* Aynabak al-Badrī who settled into power in early 779/1377. On 4 Rabī' I 779/11 July 1377 Aynabak demanded al-Mutawakkil provide caliphal sanction for his stepson Aḥmad ibn Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī to take the sultanate along with a ruling that the murder of Sha'bān had been legal. Al-Mutawakkil, perhaps expected to uphold a vague semblance of Mamluk custom, refused to consent on grounds that Aḥmad was not from the House of Qalāwūn, allegedly stating that he would not depose the son of a king in favor of the son of an amir. Anticipating the charge, Aynabak argued that the mother of his stepson, a former wife of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, had been impregnated by the late Qalawunid sultan before her marriages to Yalbughā and ultimately to Aynabak himself. The caliph remained unconvinced and thus invited the wrath of Aynabak who rebuked the Commander of the Faithful and accused him of neglecting the duties of his office in favor of worldly pleasure.⁶⁶⁹ Aynabak ordered that al-Mutawakkil be banished to Qūṣ and removed him from the caliphate on 3 Ṣafar 779/11 June 1377 to the dismay of the people.⁶⁷⁰ In need of a new Abbasid caliph, most likely to maintain legitimacy amidst his political rivals,⁶⁷¹ Aynabak summoned Abū Yaḥyā Najm al-Dīn Zakariyyā', an uneducated son of al-Wāthiq, on 4 Rabī' I 779/11 July 1377 and robed him as al-Mu'taṣim billāh, albeit without a formal abdication from al-Mutawakkil or the consensus of the '*ulamā*' or important Cairene amirs.⁶⁷² Aynabak apparently suffered a backlash for his rash treatment of the caliph al-Mutawakkil:

⁶⁶⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:998; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:287; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:148-9 Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:188-9. See also: Massoud, *Chronicles*, 249-50.

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:309; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:543; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:151; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:6; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:231-2; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:126; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:205. See also: Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 123.

⁶⁷⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:167; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:461; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:543; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:309, 4:1:24; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:293. Elsewhere, al-Maqrīzī claims al-Mutawakkil was sent away in Dhū al-Qa'da 778/March 1377. See: *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:210-1. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:155, 13:155; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:248; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 7:168; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:298; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:232; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:126, 3:132; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:205; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 87; Amalia Levanoni, "Awlad al-nas in the Mamluk Army during the Bahri Period" in *Mamluks and Ottomans Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, (eds.) David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (Routledge: Oxon and New York, 2006), 100-1; Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 132, 195.

⁶⁷¹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:543; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:127.

⁶⁷² It must be noted that many Mamluk sources identify the caliph installed by Aynabak al-Badrī as "al-Musta'sim" rather than "al-Mu'taṣim." Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 2:180; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:461; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:785; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:248-50; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:543; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:151, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:155, 13:8; al-Suyūṭī,

The mamlūks changed towards [Aynabak al-Badrī] and the hearts of the army grew estranged from him. The deputies of Syria sought to conspire against him and abandoned obedience to him for about three months.⁶⁷³

Perhaps aware of Aynabak al-Badrī's fragile hold on power, al-Mutawakkil feigned preparation for the journey to Qūṣ, even putting up the charade of leaving his home for a day though he returned without confrontation.⁶⁷⁴ Aynabak ultimately bowed to the pressure of the amirs, a distinct and powerful social class in their own right, and reinstated al-Mutawakkil on 20 Rabī' I/27 July, al-Mu'taṣim's ephemeral caliphate having lasted scarcely more than a fortnight.⁶⁷⁵ The army ousted Aynabak shortly thereafter and imprisoned him in Alexandria until his death in 780/1378-9.⁶⁷⁶

Aynabak al-Badrī's interference with the caliphate would establish a precedent for later attempts both to hand temporal power to al-Mutawakkil, or attempts to remove him from office. The caliphate of al-Mutawakkil marks the first time that factions within the Mamluk regime viewed the Abbasid caliph as an acceptable alternative to a sultan from the line of Qalāwūn or one elected from among their peers. In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, it became the norm for politics to disrupt the reign of the Abbasid caliph.⁶⁷⁷

In Rabī' I 775/August-September 1373, Mamluk authorities ordered religious dignitaries, including the caliph and other pious citizens to engage in extra-canonical communal prayers for rain as disquiet rose during a prolonged drought and citizens scrambled to purchase grain.⁶⁷⁸ Members of the 'ulamā' brought along the relics of the Prophet and washed them in the well of the *miqyās* and prayed for the Nile to increase.⁶⁷⁹

Husn, 2:83; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:126-7; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:233; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:298; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:232; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:205.

⁶⁷³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 2:181.

⁶⁷⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:309; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:249; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402.

⁶⁷⁵ According to al-Qalqashandī the period was close to three months and lasted until 20 Muḥarram 779/29 May 1377. See: *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:181. Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:461; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:310, 4:1:24; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:543; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:151-2; idem, *Dhayl*, 119 (Ibn Ḥajar claimed it lasted a month); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:155, 13:155; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:249-50; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:83; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:232; idem, *Ḍaw'*, 7:168; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:206.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 3:558; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:170; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:129; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:83. The amirs revolted in Egypt and Syria citing mismanagement of the caliphate as their cause (however, also at issue was the totalitarianism and misconduct of Aynabak). As Brinner points out, the incident demonstrates the simultaneous weakness and power of the caliph and his ability to influence sultanic succession. See: Tarkhān, *Miṣr*, 58; Brinner, "Struggle for Power," 231-2.

⁶⁷⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 402. See also: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 149-50.

⁶⁷⁸ On the importance of grain among the masses, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 56-6.

⁶⁷⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:218; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:58-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:124-5.

The Rise of al-Zāhir Barqūq (784-801/1382-99) and the Circassian Period

Ultimately Barqūq, a former mamlūk of Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, seized power as *amīr kabīr* and *atābak al-‘asākīr*. After amassing support enough to dominate the factional networks that ran Mamluk politics during 777-9/1376-8, the Circassian amir successfully ruled in all but name through the last two Qalawunid sultans, al-Manṣūr ‘Alī (778-83/1377-82) and his brother al-Ṣāliḥ Hajjī II (783-4/1382).⁶⁸⁰ Although Barqūq secured control of the government for himself on 19 Ramaḍān 784/26 November 1382 and made use of the caliph al-Mutawakkil in his ceremonial, the old guard among the Turkish amirs saw the new sultan as an upstart trampling on Qalawunid tradition.⁶⁸¹

Amidst the confusion surrounding the advent of Barqūq, various elements, this time most likely non-Circassians, tried once again to hand the sultanate to al-Mutawakkil as a stopgap ruler with limited power.⁶⁸² Merely hinted at in Mamluk sources, the attempt implies that some amirs preferred Abbasid legitimacy, which had been inseparable from the Qalawunids, over the pretensions of Barqūq, the Circassian parvenu.⁶⁸³

⁶⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:439-40, 474-5; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:175; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:2:285. Irwin, *Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 149; Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria,” 256.

⁶⁸¹ The caliph delivered a *khuṭba*, then invested Barqūq with the sultanate and exchanged caliphal honors (*tashrīf al-khilāfa*) with the sultan. Some days later the investiture deed was read to the amirs. See: Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1977), [1]:86-91. (Although this volume of the history of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, printed in 1977 and covering the years 781-800/1379-97, is outwardly labeled volume “3,” it is marked on the first page as “part 1” and appears earlier than the other three edited volumes published in 1994. Therefore, in the current work, I will hereafter refer to this edition as volume 1 of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba’s history). See also: Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:532; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:474-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:287; ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī ibn al-Ṣayraḥī, *Nuḥḍat al-nuḥḍat wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 1:36-8 (hereafter cited as al-Ṣayraḥī); al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:325; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:120. The year before taking power as sultan, Barqūq summoned the caliph and qadis to solicit their counsel. The five men advised him that the sultanate of one of the sons of Sha‘bān would be preferable to appease senior Turkish amirs unwilling to break with Qalawunid tradition by accepting the sultanate of a former *mamlūk* of Yalbughā al-‘Umarī. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:207; Van Steenberghe, *Order Out of Chaos*, 136. On Mamluk loyalty to Qalawunid tradition, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 52-5. For studies of the transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk rule, see: David Ayalon, “The Circassians in the Mamlūk Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, (1949), 135-47; Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 231-4; Amalia Levanoni, “The Background of Barquq’s Ascent to Power and the Transition from a Turkish to a Circassian Sultanate in Egypt” (PhD diss., Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1990); idem, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Account of the Transition from Turkish to Circassian Sultanate: History in the Service of Faith,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 93-105.

⁶⁸² Garcin, “Histoire,” 59; idem, “Circassian Mamlūks,” 291; idem, “Récit d’une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars,” 256. Non-Circassian amirs, largely Turks and Kurds, were interested in ousting Barquq from power during the early years of his sultanate.

⁶⁸³ Several European travelers visited the Mamluk court and observed that although Barqūq enjoyed widespread support, the Abbasid caliph initially refused to offer his consent. See: De Mignanelli, *Ascensus Barcoch*, 18; Leonardo di Frescobaldi, “Pilgrimage of Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi to the Holy Land” in Theophilus Bellorini and others, trans., *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, 1948), 45-6; 175.

Once firmly entrenched as sultan, it was perhaps inevitable that Barqūq would brandish his access to al-Mutawakkil during his enthronement rites. Anxious to exhibit adherence to ritual and tradition, the sultan's investiture ceremony proved a faithful rendition of routine Mamluk investiture practices.⁶⁸⁴ After delivering an eloquent sermon the Abbasid caliph delegated plenary powers to Barqūq as sultan, naming him al-Malik al-Zāhir, with the amirs, qadis, and *shaykh al-islām* pledging support in turn.⁶⁸⁵ The sultan then donned the black Abbasid robe to demonstrate his righteous obligation to the caliphate and the amirs kissed the ground before him.⁶⁸⁶ Five days later, on 24 Ramaḍān 784/1 December 1382, Mamluk officials read Barqūq's diploma in the presence of the caliph, qadis, amirs, and notables, all robed according to rank and prominence.⁶⁸⁷ Three days later the sultan summoned his amirs and notables and administered the oath of obedience to them.⁶⁸⁸

Intrigue and Revolt in the Name of the Caliph

In the early months of his reign, Barqūq appeased some opponents and crushed others in Egypt and Syria. He appointed his own mamlūks to influential positions to safeguard their loyalty and the cohesion of his government. In this climate of purges and arrests, the Abbasid caliphate was linked to at least three attempts to unseat the first sultan of the Burjī line.

On 1 Rajab 785/30 August 1383, Barqūq granted audience to the amir Muḥammad ibn Tankiz who informed the sultan of an alleged plot regarding which the caliph al-Mutawakkil had colluded with two amirs, Quruṭ ibn 'Umar al-Turkumānī and Ibrāhīm ibn Quṭluqtamur. They plotted to murder the sultan on the *maydān* below the citadel.⁶⁸⁹ The conspirators then planned to place the caliph at the head of the government. Ibn Tankiz swore to the validity of his statement and encouraged Barqūq to investigate the allegations. Furious, Barqūq summoned the caliph and

⁶⁸⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'riḫh*, 5:1016; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:532; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:38; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:195; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:260.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:532; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:477; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:38; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:260; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:310.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:221-2.

⁶⁸⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:477; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:226; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:46; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:321-2.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:228; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:49. On covenants sworn which personally linked supporters to the sultan (*ḥilf*), see: Holt, "Position and Power," 241-2; idem, "Structure of Government," 46-7; Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 24 note 26.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'riḫh*, 5:1017; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:544; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:493; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:109-10, 123-4, 304; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:275, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī, *Al-Sultān Barqūq, mu'assis dawlat al-mamālīk al-jarākisa, 784-801 H.-1382-1398 M.: min khilāl makhtūṭ 'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'riḫh ahl al-zamān li-Badr al-'Aynī*, ed. Īmān 'Umar Shukrī (Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 2002), 149; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:234-5; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:69-70; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 7:168; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:329-30; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:264; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:83-4; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:204; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:332.

the two accused amirs. The deputy of Egypt, Sūdūn al-Shaykhūnī, also summoned, scoffed at the notion that the caliph, “an intelligent man incapable of such an act,” might involve himself in such brazen treason.⁶⁹⁰ At the hearing, al-Mutawakkil and Ibrāhīm ibn Quṭluqtamur promptly denied any wrongdoing, but in hoping to distance himself from the caliph -- who unquestionably bore the brunt of the sultan’s fury -- Quruṭ hastily confessed:

The caliph summoned me and said: “These oppressors have seized kingship without my consent; I reluctantly invested Barqūq with the sultanate, and then he wrongfully took the wealth of the people.” [The caliph] asked that I stand with him and support the cause of righteousness; I agreed and promised to aid him by gathering 800 Kurds and Turkmen to his command.⁶⁹¹

Cornered by Barqūq, the caliph clung to his vehement denial of Quruṭ’s indictment, while Ibrāhīm ibn Quṭluqtamur, equally anxious to remove himself from the sultan’s crosshairs, likewise inculpated the caliph by claiming ignorance of any negotiation between al-Mutawakkil and Quruṭ. Ibn Quṭluqtamur testified that al-Mutawakkil had in fact *invited* him to the caliphal residence on Elephant Island (*Jazīrat al-Fīl*) and urged him to join the cause against the sultan in the name of God and the cause of truth. Al-Mutawakkil maintained innocence even during a cross-examination by Ibn Quṭluqtamur, who grilled him on seemingly specific details which the caliph brushed off as baseless hearsay. The hearing culminated with Barqūq unsheathing his sword and threatening to behead the caliph on the spot. Cooler heads prevailed, however, when Sūdūn calmed the sultan and attempted to intervene on behalf of the trio of alleged conspirators.⁶⁹² Nevertheless, Barqūq ordered crucifixion (*tasmīr*) for Ibn Quṭluqtamur and Quruṭ below the citadel after a parade of shame through Cairo. Still unsatisfied, the sultan ordered the two offenders to be bisected, though court connections helped mitigate Ibn Quṭluqtamur’s

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:494; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:110; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:234; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:70; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:204; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:332.

⁶⁹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:494. See also: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:110; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:234; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:70; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:204-5; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:332. Lutz Wiederhold points to the significance of Quruṭ’s attempt to court bedouin support for his “caliphal” revolt in view of the fact that tribal confederations such as the Banū Khafāja and Banū Faḍl had aided the early careers of both al-Mustanshir billāh and al-Ḥākim bī-amr Allāh. See: “Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a ‘Zahiri Revolt’ in Damascus in 1386,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 215.

⁶⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:494-5; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:110; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 149; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:234-5; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:71; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:204-5; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:333. Barqūq also wanted the caliph to be beaten and possibly nailed up, but Sūdūn advised against it for fear that the masses might attack the sultan and his supporters in reprisal. See: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:110; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:275; Ḍāḥī, *al-Ra’y al-‘āmm*, 62; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 88; Wiederhold, “Zahiri Revolt,” 214. De Mignanelli mentions these events but conflates them with Barqūq’s initial ascent to power. See: *Ascensus Barcoch*, 18.

sentence to imprisonment at the Shamā'il storehouse.⁶⁹³ As for the caliph, Barqūq convened a special tribunal of qadis in hopes of securing a death sentence. Reluctant to condemn the Commander of the Faithful to death, the qadis adjourned without providing Barqūq with religious sanction.⁶⁹⁴

Perplexed by having to deal with a dangerous enemy who could not be cleanly killed without deeply disturbing the religious class, courtiers, and the masses, Barqūq threw the caliph in irons in the tower of the citadel.⁶⁹⁵ The Ḥanafī qadī Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Manṣūr produced and supported a fatwa dismissing al-Mutawakkil, perhaps to rescue the caliph from further abuse.⁶⁹⁶ In order to select a new Abbasid caliph, the sultan summoned two sons of the former caliph al-Mu'taṣim Zakariyyā⁶⁹⁷ (r. 779/1377), Rukn al-Dīn 'Umar and Muḥyī al-Dīn Zakariyyā'.⁶⁹⁸ The sultan appointed 'Umar as al-Wāthiq billāh (II) for three years until that caliph's death on 19

⁶⁹³ Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:544; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5:1017-8; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:495; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:110, 124, 304; Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-Durar al-kāmina*, 119; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 149; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:235; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:71-2; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:264. He was later freed from the storehouse: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:337. On the storehouse: al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:600. As a form of punishment, bisection may have stemmed from Mongol practice and does not appear to have roots in the *sharī'a* or connection to any Islamic *ḥadd* penalty. See: Daniel Beaumont, "Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 210.

⁶⁹⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:495; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:110; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:235; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:71; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:333. Part of the argument for refusing to find the caliph guilty, may have hinged on the notion that al-Mutawakkil had the right to appoint and depose kings. See: Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 59; Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 214.

⁶⁹⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 2:181; Ibn al-'Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:544; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211, 3:293; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:275, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:235; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:251; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:264; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:83-4; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 403.

⁶⁹⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:262; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:110; Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 214. Al-Maqrīzī dates the ouster of al-Mutawakkil to 1 Rajab 785/30 August 1383. See: *Sulūk*, 4:1:24; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211.

⁶⁹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:72; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:18.

⁶⁹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:495; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:110; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 149; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:235, 13:8; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:251; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:72; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 7:168; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:341. Ibn Iyās identifies the pair as sons of al-Musta'ṣim. See: *Badā'i*, 1:2:333. The similarity of the regnal titles "al-Mu'taṣim" and "al-Musta'ṣim" confused Mamluk chroniclers' understanding of the succession. Most accounts of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo identify the pair as sons of al-Wāthiq billāh instead of al-Mu'taṣim. Several sources erroneously understood al-Mu'taṣim (1377) to be the same as al-Musta'ṣim (1386-9). Based on Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba and al-Maqrīzī, Lutz Wiederhold amended earlier Abbasid chronologies attempted by Bernard Lewis (in his *EP* article, "Abbāsids"), as well as C. E. Bosworth (*New Islamic Dynasties*, 7). According to the sources examined by Wiederhold, "caliphal succession proceeded as follows: 1377-83, al-Mutawakkil 'ala 'l-lah Muhammad; 1383-86, al-Wāthiq bi-'l-lah Rukn al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Ibrāhīm – son of the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 1377); 1386-89, al-Musta'ṣim bi-'l-lah Muḥyī al-Dīn Zakariyyā ibn al-Mu'taṣim bi-'l-lah – brother of the Caliph al-Wāthiq bi-'l-lah 'Umar (not al-Mu'taṣim!); 1389-1405, al-Mutawakkil 'ala 'l-lah Muhammad." See: "Zahiri Revolt," 231 note 91. However, I must point out that even Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba later claims that al-Musta'ṣim was the son of al-Wāthiq and was also the same man installed by Aynabak al-Badrī in 1377, thus throwing endeavors to understand caliphal succession in this period into further confusion. See: *Ta'rīkh*, 4:46; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:8.

Shawwāl 788/13 November 1386.⁶⁹⁹ Al-Mutawakkil spent the interim shackled in house arrest, stripped of his salary and properties, his future uncertain. In Ramaḍān 787/October 1385 the sultan also relieved the caliph of previous gifts including financial control of the Abū Rajwān neighborhood.⁷⁰⁰ Public opinion appeared to remain firmly rooted in the camp of the ousted caliph, and by the end of Rajab 785/September 1383, several amirs pleaded with Barqūq to restore al-Mutawakkil, kissing the ground and begging his pardon.⁷⁰¹ When Barqūq reaffirmed his commitment to seeing the caliph executed as a traitor, they continued to cajole the Mamluk sultan until at last he released the caliph from tower imprisonment and allowed him to return to the Abbasid residence within the citadel on the Muslim holy day of ‘Arafa, 9 Dhū al-Ḥijja 785/2 February 1384.⁷⁰²

Barqūq may have been wise to exercise caution toward the inherent dangers of a popular Abbasid caliph. In addition to commanding support from Turkish and bedouin riders, al-Mutawakkil, from the time of his investiture nearly two decades earlier, had cultivated alliances among the amirs of Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī and various royal mamlūks.⁷⁰³ Al-Wāthiq II, on the other hand, though described by historians as kind and good-natured, remained a non-entity. Mamluk sources mention little concerning his three-year caliphate until his illness-related demise around age 70.⁷⁰⁴

All the while, supporters of al-Mutawakkil continued to campaign for the caliph’s reinstatement.⁷⁰⁵ Barqūq, however, no less wary of the former caliph, instead assigned the caliphate to the brother of al-Wāthiq II, Muḥyī al-Dīn Zakariyyā’ installed as al-Musta‘ṣim (d.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:1018; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:544; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:495-6; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211, 3:293; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:275, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 195; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:72; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:205; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:333, 341; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:264, 277; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:377; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:213. Al-Wāthiq II was interred near the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa. Ibn Ḥajar was confused as to whether the *laqab* of the caliph had been al-Wāthiq or al-Musta‘ṣim.

⁷⁰⁰ Al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:121; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:84; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:333.

⁷⁰¹ According to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, the amirs made at least one attempt to intercede for the caliph in Ramaḍān 785. See: *Ta’rīkh*, 1:113. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:501; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:208; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:336.

⁷⁰² Ibn al-‘Irāqī, *Dhayl*, 2:544-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:504; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:116; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:237; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:251; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:82; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:210-1; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:265; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:84; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 88. Al-Malaṭī described this place as Dār al-Khalīlī in the citadel.

⁷⁰³ Ibn Ḥajar quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:85.

⁷⁰⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:201; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:315, 325-6, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:252; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:242.

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Qalqashandī described him as having a good personality, a long beard, straight-postured, good-figured; respectable, intelligent, and modest. See: *Ma’āthir*, 2:167.

801/1399).⁷⁰⁶ The Mamluk sultan arranged an impromptu *bay'a* ceremony on 20 Shawwāl 788/14 November 1386 for the qadis and notables to examine a testament produced by Zakariyyā' naming him the legal successor of his uncle al-Mu'taḍid.⁷⁰⁷ Barqūq robed the caliph, assigned him a stipend, and a week later the amirs, qadis, and *shaykh al-islām* 'Umar Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403) returned for a more formal *bay'a* ceremony at the citadel. Al-Bulqīnī oversaw the proceedings in which the new caliph entrusted Barqūq with authority over the Muslims.⁷⁰⁸ After a truncated robing ritual, the qadis and notables marched al-Musta'ṣim to his palace. A final ceremony granted al-Musta'ṣim (and the Abbasid family) a restoration of stewardship of the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa in early Dhū al-Qa'da 788/late November 1386 which the Mamluk sultan commemorated with another robing.⁷⁰⁹

The second attempt to restore the caliphate's power at the expense of Barqūq involved disaffected '*ulamā*' in Egypt and Syria rather than ambitious Mamluk amirs.⁷¹⁰ The so-called *fitna Ṣāḥiriyya* of 788/1386 in Damascus began as a revolt among several proponents attempting to revive the all-but-extinct Ṣāḥirī school of Islam.⁷¹¹ It is worth noting that some years earlier in 784/1382 Barqūq issued a decree ordering suspected Ṣāḥirīs to be investigated and penalized.⁷¹² Significantly, the Ṣāḥirī movement was a rebellion of religious scholars who did not agree with

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:262; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:551-2, 3:3:975; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:110-1, 190; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:325-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:252; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:141 (Mu'taṣim); al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:233; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:404; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:340-1; al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn*, 2:84; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:377-8; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:213.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:141; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:277; Ibn Iyās (*Badā'i'*, 1:2:377) claims the ceremony took place five days later. Al-ʿAynī calls him the son of Ibrāhīm (al-Wāthiq I) who replaced his brother al-Wāthiq II. See: *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 194.

⁷⁰⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:551-2; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:190; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:253; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:141-2; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:378; Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 214. On the influence of the al-Bulqīnī family in the later Mamluk period, see: Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 232-7; Mohammad Gharaibeh, "Brokerage and Interpersonal Relationships in Scholarly Networks. Ibn Ḥaḡar al-ʿAsqalānī and His Early Academic Career," in *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014), 238-51.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:142; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:378; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 88. Publicly naming the caliph director of the shrine henceforth became part of the caliphal investiture. Al-Sakhāwī names him "al-Mu'taṣim." See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:341.

⁷¹⁰ Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 214.

⁷¹¹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:186-7. The Ṣāḥiriyya legal rite emerged around Dāwūd ibn 'Alī al-Ṣāḥirī (d. 270-1/884) and did not acknowledge any other sources of law outside of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth which threatened the '*ulamā*' of the four Sunni *madhhabs* on the grounds that the Ṣāḥirī adherents considered their work irrelevant. The Ṣāḥirī school was largely obsolete by the fourteenth century, but Goldziher and Wiederhold have demonstrated that Ṣāḥirī ideas remained important in Damascus. On the Ṣāḥirī school: Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Ṣāḥiriten* (Leipzig, 1884); Abdel-Magid Turki, "al-Ṣāḥiriyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² - *Supplement*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11:394-6; Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 204-5.

⁷¹² Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 208.

the caliphate system that had evolved in the Islamic world over the preceding 400 years. Their goal was to depose Barqūq and to restore political power to a new, necessarily Qurayshī caliph.⁷¹³ Likely considering al-Mutawakkil and his relatives impotent figureheads compromised by the Mamluk regime, the Zāhirī scholars rejected the legitimacy of the Cairo caliphs.⁷¹⁴ One important figure behind the revolt was the Egyptian scholar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, known as Ibn al-Burhān, who was an acquaintance of the historian al-Maqrīzī.⁷¹⁵

Eventually, Barqūq had the conspirators arrested and sent to Cairo where he ordered them to be tortured until they revealed the names of amirs who had abetted them. The *fitna* Zāhiriyya also brought to light the existence of powerful preachers capable of influencing the masses to agitate against Mamluk authority in the name of the caliph, whether he was an Abbasid or not.⁷¹⁶

New challenges from abroad ushered in another moment of political importance for the Abbasid caliphate. By the late 780/1380s Barqūq struggled to balance both external and domestic threats. The career and conquests of Temūr had started in earnest and the Mamluks watched with keen interest as the new enemy army advanced westward.⁷¹⁷ In Jumādā II 789/June 1387, Barqūq summoned the caliph and other leading men of his administration to discuss Temūr. To fund an expedition to stand against Temūr in Syria and recoup his empty treasury, the sultan wanted to seize money from mosques and *waqf* endowments. After a lengthy debate in which the majority of the religious establishment opposed the sultan, they reached an agreement to confiscate the wealth of the *waqfs* in the presence of the caliph who lent his silent blessing.⁷¹⁸

Despite relative calm during the reign of al-Musta‘šim, many of the amirs remained disgruntled or feigned alienation attributed to the ejection and confinement of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, who persevered as an anti-establishment figurehead. Combined with other grievances, some of the Syrian amirs harnessed lingering resentment to stir up full blown revolt by Šafar 791/February 1389. At the center was the governor of Aleppo, Yalbughā al-Nāširī,

⁷¹³ Ibid., 210-211, 224.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., 214.

⁷¹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī’s biography of Ibn al-Burhān (*Durar al-‘uqūd*, 1:297-303) was unknown to Wiederhold and contains many valuable details regarding the Zāhirī *fitna* and its possible motivations. Walid Saleh is currently preparing a new study of the rebellion based on the biography of Ibn al-Burhān, as well as that scholar’s political “manifesto”, *Ṭarīq al-istiḳāma li-ma’rifat al-imāma*.

⁷¹⁶ Wiederhold, “Zahiri Revolt,” 212-3, 224-6.

⁷¹⁷ For the early career of Temūr, see: Maria E. Subtelny, “Tamerlane and his Descendants: From Paladins to Patrons,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, *The Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 173-8, and for his three campaigns against Mamluk territory, see: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 171-97.

⁷¹⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:386.

joined by Minṭāsh, a former mamlūk of Sha‘bān, as well as other Syrian amirs. Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī used the pretence of restoring a Qalawunid prince to power under the caliphal banner, to bolster his influence among the amirs of Syria, uniting them in opposition to the usurper.⁷¹⁹

Fearing that Yalbughā might capitalize on unresolved caliphate issues to undermine him, Barqūq ordered the return of al-Mutawakkil to tower confinement on 27 Ṣafar 791/25 February 1389 and banned all visits from the caliph’s servants, family, and companions.⁷²⁰ Barqūq continued his precautions, taking action against the sons of former sultans and ensuring that his mamlūks promptly received monthly stipends.⁷²¹

However, an army that Barqūq sent to Damascus suffered defeat by Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī in Rabī‘ I-Rabī‘ II 791/March-April 1389.⁷²² The Mamluk sultan sent peacemakers to Damascus the next month, urging Yalbughā to obey the sultan, but the rebel amir declared his own status as a champion of al-Mutawakkil’s right:

God the Exalted established me as defender of the cousin of His Prophet (may God bless him and give him peace), the Abbasid Commander of the Faithful, who is caliph of the Muslims, and who has been imprisoned for a time. If right is with me then God will make me victorious.⁷²³

Evidently alive to the harm that mistreatment of the caliph had done to his image, Barqūq wasted no time in deposing al-Musta‘ṣim and publicly reattaching himself to al-Mutawakkil with alacrity to strengthen his symbolic hold on power. To this end the sultan summoned the dishonored caliph to the citadel’s al-Rudaynī mosque in Rabī‘ I 791/March 1389, dutifully rising

⁷¹⁹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:56-7; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:365; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 235; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:349; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 89. The nobility of defending the rights of al-Mutawakkil added prestige to Yalbughā’s cause. Several Mamluk sources suggest that Barqūq’s treatment of al-Mutawakkil was a reason for the rebellion of Yalbughā. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:92; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:336. On Minṭāsh, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:94-9.

⁷²⁰ Ibid. See also: Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:1039; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:293; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:365-6; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 237; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:260-1; idem, *Manhal*, 3:298; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:253; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:188; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 7:168; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:270. This period of internment lasted only a day before Mamluk authorities allowed al-Mutawakkil to return to his dwelling (under guard) after Barqūq and his advisors felt convinced that the threat had abated. Ibn Hajar claims the sultan freed al-Mutawakkil on 2 Rabī‘ I 791/1 March 1389.

⁷²¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:261.

⁷²² Muḥammad ibn Ṣaṣrā, *al-Durra al-muḍī’a fī al-dawla al-Zāhiriyya*, ed. and trans. William M. Brinner as *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389-1397* (Berkeley, 1963), 1:8-23 (English), 2:3-13 (Arabic) (cited hereafter as Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī’a*); Gaston Wiet, “Barḳūk,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:1015-6.

⁷²³ English translation by William Brinner: Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī’a*, 1:19 (English), 2:9 (Arabic); Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 232.

from his seat as al-Mutawakkil entered.⁷²⁴ The sultan begged the caliph to pardon the strained nature of their relationship and overlook the last six years of incarceration.⁷²⁵ Whether he pardoned the sultan or not, the two reconciled and mutually swore fidelity. Barqūq sent al-Mutawakkil home after lavishing him with gifts in excess of 10,000 dirhams; woolen garments, furs, and Alexandrian silk.⁷²⁶ The sultan also granted the caliph *iqṭā'* lands, reinstated a salary, as well as stewardship of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa which had been stripped from the caliph along with its copious revenue streams some 25 years earlier.⁷²⁷

Having united many of the Syrian amirs against the Mamluk sultan, Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī himself raised the caliph's banners to destroy the "usurper" Barqūq.⁷²⁸ As outposts such as Gaza and Ramla fell to the insurrection, the increasingly beleaguered Mamluk sultan braced for a siege. Yalbughā's troops penetrated Egyptian territory and camped at Ṣālīhiyya. Barqūq advanced to Maṭariyya, but fled back to Cairo after large portions of his soldiers and amirs deserted to the more powerful side.⁷²⁹

Desperation mounting, Barqūq announced the return of al-Mutawakkil to the caliphate and publicized his own position on the 1st of Jumādā I 791/28 April 1389 before a meeting of religious and military officials in the caliph's quarters of the citadel.⁷³⁰ Again, Barqūq honored the caliph and seated him, before the qadis administered a formal mutual pledge (*mubāya'a*) between caliph and sultan. This time Barqūq gifted the caliph with a gold-saddled gray mare from

⁷²⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫh*, 9:57; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:595; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:294; Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:266, 4:46; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:261-2; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:189; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:353; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:289. Elsewhere Ibn Taghrībirdī provides 20 Rabī' I 791/19 March 1389 as the date of al-Mutawakkil's reinstatement. See: *Nujūm*, 13:155. As a royal courtesy, al-Musta'ṣim continued to receive a stipend until his death in Jumādā I 801/January 1399.

⁷²⁵ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:266; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 237; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:189; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:396-7. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 89; Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 214.

⁷²⁶ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫh*, 9:57; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:595; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:266; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:366; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 237; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:262; idem, *Manhal*, 3:299; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:189.

⁷²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:595, 605; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:266; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:268; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 89. Mamluk sources offer little information concerning al-Musta'ṣim, though after losing the caliphate he seems to have been kept in solitary confinement until death. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:233; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:340-1.

⁷²⁸ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫh*, 9:56; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:595; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:365, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:262-3.

⁷²⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:289. See also: Wiet, "Barḳūk."

⁷³⁰ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'riḫh*, 9:69; al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:268, 13:8; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:195-6; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:274; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:289; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:398-9. Some Mamluk sources place the meeting and deposition on 2 Jumādā I/29 April: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:263; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'riḫh*, 1:273; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84.

his own stock before allowing al-Mutawakkil to depart in great pomp.⁷³¹ The Mamluk sultan also emphasized that previously confiscated revenues had been returned to al-Mutawakkil. Barqūq staged another public reconciliation with the caliph some days later at the Nafīsī shrine in which the reinstatement of al-Mutawakkil was again acknowledged on 12 Jumādā I 791/9 May 1389, the caliph's name officially restored to the Friday sermon, and his investiture diploma read aloud before the qadis and the *nā'ib* of Egypt.⁷³² Attendees visited relics of the Prophet on display at the shrine, listened to readings from *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*, and joined in prayers for Barqūq's victory in the impending showdown with the Syrian amirs.⁷³³ Al-Mutawakkil left the ceremony with a grand entourage of scholars and qadis who escorted him home.⁷³⁴ Mamluk sources report that the caliph apparently spent the rest of the day moving the women of his household into a new citadel residence allocated for their use.⁷³⁵

The largesse of the sultan appeared endless as Barqūq gifted al-Mutawakkil with 1,000 dinars, wool, broadcloth, sable (*sammūr*), and choice fabrics from Ba'labakk.⁷³⁶ By 10 Jumādā I 791/7 May 1389, the caliph's name returned to the *minbars* of all remaining mosques in Egypt, but in order to further broadcast the change in caliphal policy to his subjects, several days earlier Barqūq had sent the caliph with a retinue of religious officials to ride through the streets of Cairo. In their company, a herald announced the rogue status of Yalbughā and Minṭāsh, the sultan's abolishment of non-canonical taxes, and exhorted the denizens of Cairo to fear God.⁷³⁷

Abundant, unconcealed pandering to al-Mutawakkil's position may have been the sultan's attempt at retaining loyalty and popular support in the face of Yalbughā's power surge.⁷³⁸ This required, naturally, the denunciation of the caliphate of al-Musta'ṣim whom the sultan

⁷³¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:69; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:602; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211, 3:294; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:268; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:196; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 7:168; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:399.

⁷³² Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:69, 72; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:605; Ibn Hajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:272. Al-Ṣayrafī claims mosque orators delivered the *khuṭba* in the caliph's name on 10 Jumādā I/7 May and the *'ahd* document for the caliph's son was read in the Nafīsī shrine naming him heir to the overseership. See: *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:199. Al-Suyūṭī's date is 18 Jumādā I/15 May (*Husn*, 2:84).

⁷³³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:72; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:272; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:199.

⁷³⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119.

⁷³⁵ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:273; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:269; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:399.

⁷³⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:399.

⁷³⁷ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:71; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:603; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:211, 3:294; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:274; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:367, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:269; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:197; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:274; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84.

⁷³⁸ There appears to have been a very real battle for the "hearts and minds" of the common people of the major towns of Egypt and Syria. Barqūq, Yalbughā, and Minṭāsh all saw supporters switch sides at times of victory, or for the opportunities to plunder or receive bribes. See: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 165.

arrested after formalizing his deposition.⁷³⁹ Nevertheless, Barqūq's reinstatement of al-Mutawakkil failed to halt the rebel advance on Cairo. The sultan then hoped to settle matters with a confrontation beneath the city walls on 9 Jumādā I 791/6 May 1389, though the battle fell short of a definitive outcome.⁷⁴⁰ Barqūq gradually lost the loyalty of his men as he continued attempts to raise local morale. The caliph's endorsement was of minor consolation to the sultan who alternated fits of weeping with panicked disbursements to his mamlūks.⁷⁴¹ At the same time, affairs improved for the Commander of the Faithful, who received permission to ride to his residence in the city as he pleased.⁷⁴²

On 2 Jumādā II 791/29 May 1389 Barqūq and al-Mutawakkil made a final joint appearance to demonstrate mutual solidarity, this time mingling with the *'amma* to whom they dispersed money behind the Palace of Hospitality (*Dār al-Ḍiyāfa*).⁷⁴³ Barqūq ultimately gained little from his eleventh hour public relations campaign designed to secure loyalty from the *'ulamā'* and the masses, as it became evident that Cairo itself would soon be overwhelmed. As the forces of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī closed in, Barqūq contemplated a formal surrender, but ultimately went into hiding, abandoning al-Mutawakkil at his unguarded dwelling after the final prayer of the night.⁷⁴⁴

Upon entering Cairo, Yalbughā allowed his major collaborator Minṭāsh to seize the vacant citadel on 5 Jumādā II 791/1 June 1389. While the victors busied themselves with plunder, al-Mutawakkil sauntered down from his quarters and introduced himself.⁷⁴⁵ Minṭāsh escorted the caliph to the Dome of Victory (*Qubbat al-Naṣr*) and entered the tent of Yalbughā who respectfully engaged the Abbasid caliph in a lengthy and amiable conversation.⁷⁴⁶ The victorious amir reassured the caliph that all along, his sole intention had been to restore the caliph's rightful

⁷³⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:8; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:253; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 403; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:289; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:399.

⁷⁴⁰ Wiet, "Barqūk."

⁷⁴¹ Garcin, "Histoire," 60.

⁷⁴² Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:84.

⁷⁴³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:81-2; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:611-2; Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:280; idem, *Manhal*, 3:305; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:206. On Barqūq and his relations with the *'amma*, see: Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 260; Ḍāḥī, *al-Ra'y al-'amm*, 61-3.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:87; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:613-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:285; idem, *Manhal*, 3:305; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:210; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:274.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:89; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:620; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:368; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:287; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:214.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:368; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:621; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahiyya*, 84; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:286; idem, *Manhal*, 3:308-9; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:214.

authority: “O our master! Commander of the Faithful! My sword strikes not but to aid your cause!”⁷⁴⁷

The amirs included the caliph as part of an impromptu advisory session at the Gate of the Chain (*Bāb al-Silsila*) to discuss the thorny and divisive issue of succession to Barqūq.⁷⁴⁸ Just as he had nipped in the bud any attempts to hand him the sultanate at al-‘Aqaba thirteen years earlier, al-Mutawakkil prudently recommended that the office be returned to a worthy Qalawunid, and thus al-Šāliḥ Ḥājjī was restored (this time as al-Manšūr) by way of caliphal *bay‘a* in mid-Jumādā II 791/June 1389.⁷⁴⁹ On the 15th of the month, the renewed regime of Ḥājjī conferred lofty honors (*tashrīf jalīl*) on al-Mutawakkil and other dignitaries as the investiture deed was read to observers.⁷⁵⁰ Compliant in signing any and all orders set before him, al-Mutawakkil sustained himself as an indispensable well-spring of legitimacy and later retired to his citadel residence unscathed.⁷⁵¹

Chaos crippled Cairo in the weeks that followed as victorious rebel forces pillaged the city and impoverished Cairenes helped themselves to the leftovers.⁷⁵² Yalbughā al-Nāširī stationed the caliph in a private tent secluded from the other qadis and notables who came to congratulate him. Despite enjoying majority support among the amirs, Yalbughā dared not risk alienating his powerful ally Minṭāsh. He made a show of refusing the sultanate when it was offered to him; instead, he produced an order co-signed by the caliph to free compatriots who Barqūq had imprisoned in Alexandria. With a manhunt for the fugitive sultan underway, Yalbughā began to make new appointments for every major position below the caliphate itself.⁷⁵³

Rebel forces discovered Barqūq before long and exiled him to al-Karak, as escalating tensions between Yalbughā and Minṭāsh erupted in Sha‘bān 791/July-August 1389. Al-Mutawakkil, who had kept a low profile in the interim, found himself involved in politics once again. Minṭāsh had stealthily accumulated support and resources by winning Yalbughā’s

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:294; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:286; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85.

⁷⁴⁸ Al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 242; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:402.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:94, 105; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:622-3; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:294; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:368, 2:344; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:319; al-Šayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:215; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 242; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:274; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:404. See also: Garcin, “Histoire,” 60; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 90.

⁷⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:630.

⁷⁵¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:621; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:368-9; al-‘Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 242; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:287; Garcin, “Histoire,” 60.

⁷⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:285-6.

⁷⁵³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:91; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:621; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:287. Thus the symbolic value of the caliphal office remained a constant in the power struggles between competing Mamluk factions. See: Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 232.

mamlūks to his side.⁷⁵⁴ Yalbughā sent the caliph to parlay with his former rival whereupon Minṭāsh feigned steadfast claims of loyalty to Ḥājji, while vowing revenge against Yalbughā the “usurper” who Minṭāsh claimed had deprived him of prime *iqṭā*’s and 500,000 dirhams.⁷⁵⁵ Disregarding the good offices of the Commander of the Faithful, Minṭāsh bellowed his grievances even as al-Mutawakkil turned his back and left.⁷⁵⁶

After the caliph’s debriefing, Yalbughā rallied his troops for a confrontation against Minṭāsh that resulted in stalemate.⁷⁵⁷ Eventually, Minṭāsh secured the upper hand over his enemy as news arrived that Barqūq had escaped from prison, rallied support at al-Karak, and raised an army among the bedouins.⁷⁵⁸

Against this new threat, Minṭāsh hoarded resources and attempted to attract the old stalwarts of Barqūq. He also took steps to strengthen his position by having Ḥājji invest him in place of Yalbughā as *atābak al-‘asākir* on 7 Shawwāl 791/29 September 1389.⁷⁵⁹

After a preliminary meeting to discuss the crimes of Barqūq,⁷⁶⁰ Minṭāsh summoned the caliph, qadis, and ‘*ulamā*’ on 21 Dhū al-Qa‘da 791/11 November 1389 to finish drafting a fatwa on the legality of declaring war against the former sultan.⁷⁶¹ Attending personnel drafted the document condemning Barqūq on grounds that he had wrongfully deposed both Ḥājji and al-Mutawakkil and “fought against the Muslims with the aid of unbelievers.”⁷⁶² Ten copies of the document were cosigned by qadis and notables.⁷⁶³ On 25 Dhū al-Qa‘da 791/15 November 1389, Minṭāsh met with amirs and government officials including al-Mutawakkil and the qadis to

⁷⁵⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:332-7; idem, *Manhal*, 4:96-7; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:277; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:120.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:120-1; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:644; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:372; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:335-6; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:237-8; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:277.

⁷⁵⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:644; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:372-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:336; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:237-8.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:121; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:336-7. According to al-Ṣayrafi, Minṭāsh and some of his fighters hid near a *madrasa* posing as ‘*amma*, then fired an intense barrage of naphtha projectiles towards Yalbughā, al-Mutawakkil, and the sultan who were standing together, forcing the three of them to flee for cover. See: *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:238-9.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:372-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:347-50; idem, *Manhal*, 3:312-3, 4:97-8; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:279.

⁷⁵⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:655-6.

⁷⁶⁰ Al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:262.

⁷⁶¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh*, 9:155, 157; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:377; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:294-5, 299; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:668-70; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:262-4. A slightly earlier attempt failed to produce a fatwa (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:357-8). Ibn Iyās (*Badā’i*, 1:2:417) puts the date of this in Dhū al-Ḥijja 791. Ibn al-Furāt claims they were initially summoned on 19 Dhū al-Qa‘da, see: *Ta’rīkh*, 9:155.

⁷⁶² Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 1:377; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:294-5, 299; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:670, 673; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:359-60; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:263-4; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:417. Other allegations included the unlawful appropriation of public property and the murder of a descendant of the Prophet.

⁷⁶³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:359; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:417.

confirm the maturity and competence of Ḥājjī.⁷⁶⁴ The first act of the sultan's majority was the declaration of war on Barqūq. In the final months of 791/1389, Minṭāsh produced fatwas declaring Barqūq an enemy and ordered the caliph and qadis to sign it.⁷⁶⁵

Amidst the chaos unleashed on Cairo during the revolt against Barqūq, the Faraj Gate (*Bāb al-Faraj*) had sustained damage significant enough for authorities to order it sealed, effectively restricting access to the Aydugmish alleyway (*khūkha*) and disturbing daily life for a small sector of the populace in Dhū al-Ḥijja 791/November-December 1389. Although details remain sparse, unhappy residents may have managed to receive an audience with al-Mutawakkil, whom they prevailed upon to intercede with Minṭāsh, ultimately persuading him to re-open it.⁷⁶⁶

Minṭāsh demanded a last minute affirmation of al-Mutawakkil's support, and in return guaranteed that the caliph's cousin al-Mustaʿsim Zakariyyāʾ would never again pose a threat to his caliphate. As a sign of good faith, Minṭāsh ordered his supporters to seize the former caliph from his home on 15 Dhū al-Ḥijja 791/5 December 1389, confiscate sensitive documents (including a diploma naming him *walī al-ʿahd* by his father), and imprison him in a hall of the citadel.⁷⁶⁷

Minṭāsh ordered the qadis to join his camp on the outskirts of Cairo at Raydāniyya, and on 22 Dhū al-Ḥijja/12 December, led a vanguard of amirs as the remaining forces followed in the company of al-Mutawakkil and the qadis.⁷⁶⁸ After a pitched battle against the resurgent forces of Barqūq at Shaqḥab in early Muḥarram 792/January 1390, Minṭāsh fled, abandoning the sultan Ḥājjī, caliph al-Mutawakkil, and the chief qadis to Barqūq. After seizing the coffers of his foe and

⁷⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:673; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:359-60; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:266. Al-Malaṭī writes that Minṭāsh assembled the caliph and other dignitaries to testify to the maturity of Ḥājjī in Shawwāl 791/October 1389. See: *Nayl al-amal*, 2:281.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:299; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:360-1; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:266; Ibn Iyās says this was on 17 Dhū al-Ḥijja 791/7 December 1389 (*Badāʾiʾ*, 1:2:417). Ibn Khaldūn writes of his own disgust at having been forced to sign the document by Minṭāsh. See: *Taʾrīf*, 330-1. See also: Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 124.

⁷⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:675; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:267-8; Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 9:162; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʾ*, 1:2:420-1. According to al-Maqrīzī, it was the Faraj Gate, one of the western gates of Cairo. See: *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:280 note 2, 3:141-2.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 9:163, 166; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 1:377; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:302; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:676, 678; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:362, 364; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:269; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:282. Zakariyyāʾ was imprisoned in the Silver Hall (*Qāʾat al-Fiḍḍa*).

⁷⁶⁸ Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh*, 9:167; Aḥmad ibn Ḥijjī, *Taʾrīkh Ibn Ḥijjī: ḥawādīth wa-wafayāt 796-815 H.*, ed. Abū Yaḥyā ʿAbd Allāh al-Kundarī (Beirut, 2003), 1:361; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:680; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 3:294; Abū Ḥamid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 87; Ibn Ḥajar, *Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina*, 119; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:303; al-ʿAynī, *Sultān Barqūq*, 260; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:365; idem, *Manhal*, 4:98; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:282; De Mignanelli, *Ascensus Barcoch*, 23-4; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:354; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:290; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:282. On Raydāniyya see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:464.

stripping the qadis of their possessions, the former sultan allayed his prisoners' fears with gracious speech.⁷⁶⁹

Barqūq emerged victorious, and having captured Ḥājji's royal banners, posed beneath them flanked by the defeated sultan and the Abbasid caliph, as soldiers from the defeated army steadily swelled his ranks.⁷⁷⁰ At his camp in Shaqḥab, Barqūq assembled notables and amirs in the presence of al-Mutawakkil and the qadis. His first act was to depose Ḥājji from the sultanate with the support of the qadis and a renewal of his sovereignty through caliphal *bay'a*. A new ceremony reestablished Barqūq as sultan, after which he rode into a lavishly decorated Cairo on 14 Ṣafar 792/1 February 1390 with the caliph and qadis leading the way to calm tension as Mamluk functionaries tossed gold coins to gathered crowds standing near the city entrances.⁷⁷¹ Anxious to emphasize the validity of his return in Egypt, Barqūq wasted little time in staging a repeat of his installation ceremony with al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, and the *shaykh al-Islām*.⁷⁷² Barqūq and the caliph exchanged black Abbasid robes and on 23 Ṣafar 792/10 February 1390 a copy of the sultan's investiture deed was read at the Palace of Justice (*Dār al-'Adl*) after which al-Mutawakkil was robed in the company of other dignitaries.⁷⁷³ Not long after his second investiture, Barqūq wrote to the *nā'ib* of Alexandria, stating, "I am victorious, having defeated Mīntāsh, and with me are the sultan and the caliph. The caliph is pleased to have me become sultan and has deposed the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr."⁷⁷⁴

Mīntāsh meanwhile attempted a frantic counter-attack but was repulsed to Syria.⁷⁷⁵ In spite of his defeat, Mīntāsh remained a threat to Barqūq for another two years until his

⁷⁶⁹ Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī'a*, 1:75-6 (English), 2:50-1 (Arabic); al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:693-6; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 88; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh*, 9:185-7; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:391; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:320; al-'Aynī, *al-Sulṭān Barqūq*, 294-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:362-4, 369; idem, *Manhal*, 3:314, 4:98.

⁷⁷⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:694; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:369; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:285.

⁷⁷¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh*, 9:200-2; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:704-5; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:320-4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:392, 2:344; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 292, 297-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:371, 12:2-4; idem, *Manhal*, 3:315-6; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:285-6, 297-8; De Mignanelli, *Ascensus Barcoch*, 26; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:358; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:294; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:287-8.

⁷⁷² Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta'rikh*, 1:361; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:344-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:705; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 1:326; al-'Aynī, *al-Sulṭān Barqūq*, 298; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:4; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:295. Barqūq's *taqlīd* was read on 23 Ṣafar 792/10 February 1390 in the Dār al-'Adl and al-Mutawakkil, present at the reading, received a robe (*Sulūk*, 3:2:708). Ibn Ḥajar claims the *taqlīd* was read on 20 Jumādā I 792/6 May 1390 (*Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:397). For ceremonial details, see: Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh*, 9:200.

⁷⁷³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh*, 9:202; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:2-4; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:297-8.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī'a*, 1:83 (English), 2:57 (Arabic).

⁷⁷⁵ De Mignanelli, *Ascensus Barcoch*, 25; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:284; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:294. Many chroniclers present the ongoing rebellion of Mīntāsh as the most important event of 793/1391. See: Sami G. Massoud, "Notes on the Contemporary Sources of the Year 793," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 178-94.

assassination in Ramaḍān 795/July 1393.⁷⁷⁶ The former caliph Zakariyyā', along with others imprisoned by Miṭāsh in the citadel, were freed shortly after Barqūq's victory by the amir Būṭā.⁷⁷⁷

Having repaired his troubled relationship with the caliph before his flight from Cairo, Mamluk sources imply that Barqūq made no attempt to penalize al-Mutawakkil for collaborating with Yalbughā and Miṭāsh. Some authors claim the sultan was kind to the caliph for the remainder of his reign.⁷⁷⁸ Deference to the caliphate may have also reflected Barqūq's ongoing vulnerability before his fellow mamlūks, because of his non-Turkish background, as well as memories of the public discontent that resulted from earlier mistreatment of the Abbasid caliph.

Al-Mutawakkil quietly resumed his reign during the second act of Barqūq's political career while the Mamluk sultan focused his attention on Temūr. However, neither Barqūq nor his chancery relied much on the sultan's status as protector of the Abbasid caliphate in official correspondence with Temūr.⁷⁷⁹ Others in the region shared Mamluk unease over the ambitions of the Central Asian warlord. In late 796/1394, neighboring rulers sent envoys to Cairo seeking anti-Temūr alliances, including Toqtamīsh the amir of the Golden Horde, Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn the ruler of Sīwās in eastern Asia Minor, and the Ottoman sultan Bayezid.⁷⁸⁰

In his communications with Bayezid, Temūr reminded the Ottoman sultan of Barqūq's slave status as well as his audacious imprisonment of al-Mutawakkil and usurpation of the

⁷⁷⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:41-2; idem, *Manhal*, 3:315, 4:99; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 2:332-3. See: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 122. According to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, in Syria, Miṭāsh continued to manipulate the social standing of the caliph and in Jumādā 792/May 1390 sent false reports to mosque personnel urging them to announce that Barqūq had again imprisoned al-Mutawakkil, and that Syrians should pray for the Commander of the Faithful. See: *Ta'rīkh*, 1:333.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rīkh*, 9:192; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:700; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:324; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:376.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *al-Durra al-muḍī'a*, 1:75-6 (English), 2:50-1 (Arabic); al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 3:294; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:345; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254. That al-Mutawakkil found himself in a better situation than that of his grandfather al-Mustakfī on the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 709/1310, may have been because of the greater level of prestige, popularity, and influence he enjoyed along with a stronger connection with the 'ulamā', Yalbughāwī amirs, and the masses. See also: Garcin, "Histoire," 61. Gaudefroy-Demombynes suggests that after his reinstatement, the caliph appeared to enjoy a heightened sense of freedom and financial independence during the second reign of Barqūq. See: *Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks*, xxiv. Non-Mamluk sources, however, paint a slightly different picture of Barqūq's return. See my discussion of traveller's accounts in Chapter 4.

⁷⁷⁹ The earlier troubles which plagued relations between the caliph and sultan may provide some explanation as to why the Mamluk sultan chose not to name the caliph on the coins and diplomatic correspondence of this period. Nevertheless, Broadbridge observed that Temūr's invasion helped Barqūq revive the Mamluk image as "guardians" of Islam which had been largely dormant during the Qalawunid period after the collapse of the Ilkhanids. See: *Kingship and Ideology*, 170-1. Garcin also suggests that the difficult relationship between al-Mutawakkil and al-Zāhir Barqūq may account for the slightly negative portrayal of the Abbasid caliphate in the popular *sīra* literature of al-Zāhir Baybars in the late fourteenth century. See: "Récit d'une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars," 256.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:58-9.

Qalawunid throne.⁷⁸¹ In his correspondence with Temür, Barqūq, through his chancery, expressed incredulity that Temür should demand submission after the Mamluks had already yielded to the authority of “the commander of the faithful and caliph of the Prophet of God, lord of the worlds.”⁷⁸²

Despite growing Ottoman power fueled by conquest and expansion, Bayezid encountered many rivals among the other beys or march lords of Anatolia, local dynastic rulers whose domains, the beyliks, the Ottomans ultimately absorbed. Bayezid requested an Abbasid investiture diploma recognizing him as the heir of the Seljuqs, and, according to some sources, Barqūq sent his governor of al-Karak, Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Kujkunī, to the Ottoman sultan with the requested document.⁷⁸³ The blessing of the caliph, backed by the endorsement of the powerful Mamluks carried clout in the region and may have supplemented other Ottoman legitimacy claims.⁷⁸⁴ In return, the Mamluk sultan wanted Bayezid to abandon his plans to attack two Mamluk allies in the region, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qaramān and Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn. The Ottoman sultan honored this request at least until Barqūq’s death.⁷⁸⁵

Also that month, Barqūq prepared to leave on expedition and dispersed dirhams to his subordinates, offering 1,060 to every commander and 10,000 (‘*asharat ālāf*’) to the caliph. After borrowing thousands of dinars from local merchants, the sultan set out for Damascus with al-

⁷⁸¹ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 180.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷⁸³ This may have occurred in Rabī‘ II 794/February 1392. See: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:424. According to al-Suyūṭī, in 797/1395 Bayezid sent gifts to Cairo for al-Mutawakkil and a letter to Barqūq seeking a diploma that would recognize him as “Sultan of Rūm.” On this matter, al-Suyūṭī refers to the historical work of the Aleppan scholar Abī al-Walīd ibn Shīḥna. See: *Ḥusn*, 2:85. Although Mamluk sources mention few details about the request or the exchange, it may have occurred when an Ottoman vizier made a brief sojourn in Damascus en route to pilgrimage in late 798/1396. See: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 175 note 40. On Bayezid’s interest in the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo see: Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485-91* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 66-7.

⁷⁸⁴ Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 66-7. On the evolution of Ottoman dynastic legitimacy in relation to the conquest of Mamluk lands, see the work of Colin Imber: “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth,” *Turcica* 19 (1987): 22-5; *idem*, “Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History,” in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London: Longman, 1995), 149; *idem*, “Frozen Legitimacy,” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 105-6. See also: Halil İnalcık, “Appendix: The Ottomans and the Caliphate,” in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 1, eds. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 320-1.

⁷⁸⁵ During the reign of Barqūq’s son al-Nāṣir Faraj, however, Bayezid attacked his former Mamluk allies and encroached on Mamluk territory. Thus, the Ottomans had no assistance from the Mamluks when Temür finally invaded Anatolia and defeated Bayezid at the Battle of Ankara in 804/1402. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:217, 269; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:81. See also: John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 41; Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 66-7; Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (London: John Murray, 2005), 27-30; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 188-9, 192-3.

Mutawakkil and the other chief religious functionaries at the end of the month.⁷⁸⁶ After little more than a standoff interrupted by several skirmishes with Temür's forces near the Euphrates, the Mamluk sultan returned to Cairo with the Egyptian army.

Save for a few public processions, Mamluk sources mention little concerning al-Mutawakkil during the final five years of Barqūq's rule.⁷⁸⁷ Mamluk vassal regimes such as those of Mārdīn and Sīwās, minted coins and pronounced the *khutba* in Barqūq's name rather than that of al-Mutawakkil, which, according to one modern historian, suggests that they considered loyalty to the caliphate less a matter of Islamic unity and more a show of deference to their Mamluk overlords.⁷⁸⁸ At the dawn of the fifteenth century in Cairo, the caliph maintained his public persona and attended several funerary prayers as a high profile guest of honor and occasional prayer leader for amirs,⁷⁸⁹ scholars,⁷⁹⁰ colleagues,⁷⁹¹ and family members.⁷⁹²

The Mamluk sultan himself passed away after an illness on 15 Shawwāl 801/20 June 1399. The day before his death Barqūq summoned al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, and prominent heads of state to discuss succession in his council chamber. Barqūq unwittingly set a precedent for future sultans throughout the Circassian Burjī period, by having the caliph pledge to guarantee the succession of the sultan's son after the death of the father. The qadis, amirs, and officials took the oath as well and swore to a succession list of Barqūq's eldest son Faraj followed by his brothers 'Abd al-'Azīz and Ibrāhīm. Barqūq's testament included the stipulation that *amīr kabīr* Aytamish (also Aytimish) al-Bajāsi and Taghrībirdī al-Bashbughāwī, father of the historian, be executors of his affairs while all were formally subject to the sanction and supervision (*imḍā'*) of al-Mutawakkil.⁷⁹³ It was in this sense that the Circassian sultans began to employ the caliph as

⁷⁸⁶ Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī'a*, 1:194-5, 203-4 (English) 2:145-6, 150-1 (Arabic); Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 1:470, 474. On the money lending role (and financial exploitation) of merchants in Mamluk society, see: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 117-30.

⁷⁸⁷ On 15 Ṣafar 797/10 December 1394 al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, and amirs took part in a procession presumably welcoming the sultan back to Cairo after he had strengthened defenses in Syria against a possible return by Temür. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:61-2; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:472.

⁷⁸⁸ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 150.

⁷⁸⁹ Qalamṭāy al-'Uthmānī al-Dawādār al-Kabīr al-Zāhirī in Jumādā I 800/January-February 1398. See: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:475.

⁷⁹⁰ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭūlūnī al-Muhandis in Rajab 801/March 1399.

⁷⁹¹ *Shaykh al-Islām* Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī in Dhū al-Qa'da 805/June 1403 at the Bāb al-Futūḥ near the al-Hākīm mosque. See: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:171.

⁷⁹² His father-in-law, the Shāfi'ī qadī Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān in Muḥarram 803/August-September 1400. (See: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:27; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:373).

⁷⁹³ Ibn Hījī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:357-8; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:936; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 91; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:102, 104; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 494; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 1:494-5, 2:6-7; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:120; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:22-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:399; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:335; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:524-5. See also: Garcin, "Histoire," 61.

guarantor of their dynastic aspirations, even though the caliph had no practical power to enforce any such request.⁷⁹⁴

Al-Nāṣir Faraj (801-15/1399-1412)

After Barqūq died, his eldest son Faraj presented himself before the amirs who summoned al-Mutawakkil and the religious dignitaries to the royal stables of the citadel. The caliph delivered a sermon before pledging allegiance to the young Faraj as sultan with authority over the Muslims on 15 Shawwāl 801/20 June 1399.⁷⁹⁵ Donning a black caliphal robe, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Faraj ascended the citadel on horseback with royal emblems and later draped al-Mutawakkil in a magnificent robe as his father's amirs prepared for the royal funeral.⁷⁹⁶ The next day the investiture deed for Faraj was read in the presence of the caliph, the *kātib al-sirr* Faṭḥ al-Dīn Faṭḥ Allāh, and other military and religious dignitaries.⁷⁹⁷

Anxious to assert independence, Faraj spent several months prevailing upon his father's executors to acknowledge his maturity. While Barqūq's amirs were split over the decision, Faraj ultimately succeeded and al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, and the *shaykh al-islām* appeared on 6 Rabī' I 802/6 November 1399 to officiate and receive commemorative robes.⁷⁹⁸ A participant described the ceremony to al-Qalqashandī:

First, the caliph [al-Mutawakkil] and the *shaykh al-islām* Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī presented themselves, [followed by] the four qadis, the scholars (*ahl al-'ilm*), the notable amirs (*umarā' al-dawla*) at a location near the sultan's stables known as the Ḥarrāqa. The caliph sat in the center of the congregation upon a seat which had been covered (*mafrūsh*) for him. Next entered the sultan, who at that time was very young (*hadathun*), and sat before [the caliph]. The *shaykh al-islām* asked if he had reached

⁷⁹⁴ Modern scholars suggest that later sultans knew full well that the caliph had no power to enforce their wishes and that their young sons would be quickly set aside. See: Holt, "Position and Power," 239-40; Levani, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 264.

⁷⁹⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:277; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:959; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:50; al-'Aynī, *Sulṭān Barqūq*, 494; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:169; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:5-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:24; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:536. (Barqūq died on the 15th. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba reports that the *bay'a* for Faraj occurred at dawn the next day. See: *Ta'rīkh*, 4:19. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks*, xxiv-xxv.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:169; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:5; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:24. It is interesting to point out that in addition to titles such as al-Ghāzī and al-'Ādil al-Mujāhid, Barqūq included "al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh" (*laqab* of the Fatimid and Abbasid caliphs of Cairo) among the long list of titles engraved in his *madrasa*-mausoleum complex. See: *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum. Première partie. Égypte*. Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire t. 19 fasc. 3. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1979), 303-4.

⁷⁹⁷ Al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:18.

⁷⁹⁸ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:67-8; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:985; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:94-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:182-3; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:33-4; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:32; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:343. Some ceremonial similarity existed between caliphal investitures and declarations of maturity. See: Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks*, xxii.

maturity, and the sultan confirmed that he had. The caliph delivered a *khuṭba*, and then informed the sultan that he had delegated authority to him according to the aforementioned ceremonial. A black garment was then brought to the caliph, an embroidered black turban, covered with a black embroidered *tarḥa*. The caliph returned to his seat, and a throne was erected next to the seat of the caliph for the sultan, who took his place. The qadis and amirs sat around him according to rank. For his investiture of the sultan, the caliph received a gift of one thousand dinars and fabric from Alexandria.⁷⁹⁹

Worried that the amirs of Syria would harbor initial misgivings about the succession of Barqūq's underage son, Mamluk authorities in Cairo agreed on 16 Shawwāl 801/21 June 1399 to send al-Mutawakkil and a group of amirs with the courier rider (*'alā al-barīd*) to reassure the deputies in Syria, secure their allegiance, and return with testaments pledging their loyalty to Faraj.⁸⁰⁰ Tensions between the Circassian and Turkish Mamluk factions created confusion during the early reign of Faraj, as some of his father's amirs attempted to wrest control from the young sultan.⁸⁰¹ Ultimately the Mamluk sultanate would descend into a twelve-year civil war and over the course of his reign Faraj had to make at least seven missions to Syria to secure control there.⁸⁰² To emphasize his moral superiority and divine favor, Faraj frequently traveled with the caliph and chief qadis.

On 8 Rajab 802/5 March 1400, the Mamluk sultan made one of his first ventures into Syria to subdue the rebellious amir Tanam al-Zāhirī, who, after the death of Barqūq, had seized the Damascus citadel and laid siege to Ḥamā and Tripoli. To demonstrate the right guidance of his cause, Faraj, after parading on the *maydān* with the chief religious notables of his regime, travelled to Syria with al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, amirs, and 7,000 horsemen.⁸⁰³

Meanwhile, Temūr and his forces approached the Mamluk frontier to exploit the chaos that had followed the death of the powerful Barqūq. Hitherto, the warlord conqueror had avoided a direct confrontation with the Mamluks due largely to Barqūq's superior military strength and

⁷⁹⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:277.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:172; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:8-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:537-8. In Rabī' I 802/November 1399, the early administration of Faraj sought to pacify unrest among amirs in Tripoli, dissatisfied by the minority of Faraj, with a special document issued from the sultan, the caliph, the four chief qadis and important Cairene amirs urging the people to accept the succession. See: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 4:73.

⁸⁰¹ Indeed, Holt aptly characterizes the politics of Faraj's reign as "a kaleidoscope of events." See: *Age of the Crusades*, 180.

⁸⁰² John Wansbrough, "Faraj, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Zayn al-Dīn Abū 'l-Sa'ādāt," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 2:781-2; Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 263.

⁸⁰³ According to al-Maqrīzī, on 4 Rajab 802/1 March 1400 Faraj departed from the citadel with the caliph, qadis, amirs, and army to Raydāniyya to fight Aytamish and the deputy of Syria. See: *Sulūk*, 3:3:1003; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2: 52, 99-102; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:200; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:47-8, 54-7; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:37-9; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:343-4; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:572-4. After some fighting near Gaza, Tanam's army fled, and Tanam himself was captured and put to death on 3 Ramaḍān 802/28 April 1400. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:210-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:583-4.

the relative stability and unity existing in Cairo and Syria thanks to the efforts of his amirs by 801/1398-9.⁸⁰⁴

To secure the loyalty of his officers in the face of Temür's renewed threat to the Mamluk hinterland, Faraj maintained consistent payments to his father's troops. On 27 Muḥarram 803/17 September 1400, the sultan summoned al-Mutawakkil, the qadis, and his main administrators to obtain a fatwa permitting the extraction of money from merchants to cover the expenses of preparing to face Temür.⁸⁰⁵ The sultan's advisors cautioned him against acting in ways which clearly contravened the *sharī'a*, and other arrangements to obtain funds had to be made. Mamluk sources complained that affairs in Cairo were troubled by disputes between the sultan and amirs that had not been seen since the earlier years of Barqūq.⁸⁰⁶

The forces of Temür descended on the Syrian cities of Aleppo and Ḥamā in Rabī' I 803/October 1400, and after inflicting carnage on the inhabitants, headed towards Damascus.⁸⁰⁷ Faraj mustered his forces to confront Temür in early Rabī' II 803/November 1400 with the caliph in tow.⁸⁰⁸ The Mamluk sultan and his army headed first toward Raydāniyya, then Gaza. Faraj and the caliph entered Damascus on 6 Jumādā I/23 December, and for several days awaited the arrival of Temür's forces.⁸⁰⁹ After minor scuffles between the opposing sides, the Mamluk amirs, plagued by internecine bickering, whisked Faraj back to Cairo.⁸¹⁰ As Damascus fell to the same grisly plight as the other Syrian cities, Faraj returned to Cairo with al-Mutawakkil on 5 Jumādā II 803/21 January 1401.⁸¹¹ Unsure of Temür's plans, Faraj struggled to gather funds to carry on a resistance and included the caliph, qadis, and a group of *shaykhs* in his preparations to return to Damascus.⁸¹² As for Cairo, which had abandoned Syria to absorb the brunt of Temür's

⁸⁰⁴ Al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:8.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:145; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1028-9; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:134; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:218; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:46-47.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:134; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:218.

⁸⁰⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1030-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:223-5; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:74-7; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:48-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:596-603.

⁸⁰⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1037; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:229-30 (3 Rabī' II); al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:74, 78-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:49-50; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:414; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:351-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:602.

⁸⁰⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1040-2; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:159-60; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:232-3; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:78, 82-6; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:605-8.

⁸¹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1044; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:236-7; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:85-7.

⁸¹¹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 4:170, 184; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:137; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:87; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:352-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1:2:610. Temür and his men plundered Damascus and the other major Syrian towns before moving on in Rajab 803/March 1401. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:245-6; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:87-94; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:48-50. See also: Wansbrough, "Faraj." Faraj appears to have briefly sent the caliph and qadis to accompany an anti-Temür campaign to Ṣālihiyya leaving Cairo in Sha'bān 803/April 1401.

⁸¹² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:246; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:352.

aggression, the warlord demanded little from the Mamluk establishment beyond payment of tribute and the minting of coins in the conqueror's name.⁸¹³

Temür granted amnesty to Damascus a month later on 11 Rajab 803/25 February 1401. While encamped outside the city, he held a famous summit with Ibn Khaldūn. Among other things, the pair discussed assiduous support for Abbasid legitimacy in Mamluk lands.⁸¹⁴

In Šafar 804/September 1401, a group of leading Cairene amirs including Nawrūz al-Ḥāfīzī, Jakam, Sūdūn Ṭāz, and others, increasingly frustrated both by their own internal struggles and by the unsatisfactory rule of Faraj, boycotted his court, sought to rebel against the sultan, and fought each other for supremacy. On 11 Šafar 804/20 September 1401, Faraj sent the caliph and qadis to intercede with the disgruntled parties, but ultimately tried to appease the amirs through coveted appointments and other gifts.⁸¹⁵ When tensions flared up again some months later, on 2 Shawwāl 804/5 May 1402, Faraj again summoned the chief religious functionaries and ordered them to descend into the city to call upon the displeased amirs and browbeat them into swearing allegiance to the sultan.⁸¹⁶ When the amirs planned to attack the citadel, on 14 Shawwāl 804/17 May 1402, Faraj rode out with the caliph and the amirs, and brought the battle to Qarāfa. Those loyal to the sultan met their foes, whom they defeated and captured, others like Nawrūz and Jakam fled. Faraj returned to the citadel to celebrate his victory with the caliph and qadis.⁸¹⁷

After the Battle of Ankara in 804/1402 Temür wrote to Cairo from Izmir to inform Faraj of the defeat of the Ottomans. In Jumādā I 805/November-December 1402, the sultan ordered the caliph, qadis, and important amirs to be on hand to greet a pair of messengers sent by Temür, Mas'ūd al-Kujujānī and Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-Jazarī who had arrived from Damietta the previous

⁸¹³ Based on a study of diplomatic relations of the period, Broadbridge concluded that Temür humiliated Faraj, "the son of a slave," and having temporarily destroyed Mamluk ideological claims, forced the Mamluk sultan to become a tribute-paying vassal. See: *Kingship and Ideology*, 188.

⁸¹⁴ I discuss relevant details of this meeting in Chapter 3. See also: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 4:182. For his part, Temür seems to have been indifferent towards the Abbasid caliphate. He sought his own legitimacy by connecting himself to the line of Chinggis Khan. To achieve this, Temür became a "royal son-in-law" (*kürgan*) by marrying a Chinggisid princess and establishing a puppet khān to secure his position in the post-Mongol world. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, "[Temür's puppet khān] Sultan Maḥmūd was merely a tool in the hands of Temür, their custom being that only one of kingly lineage can be made sultan over them." See: *Nujūm*, 12:242. For remarks on Temür's ideology and legitimation, see: John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 85–125; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 9, 168–9.

⁸¹⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:281–3; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:69; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:421; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:361–2; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 369.

⁸¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1083; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:203; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:284; al-Šayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:139; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:361; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:77; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:650–1; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 162–3, 391–3.

⁸¹⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:285–7; al-Šayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:139–42; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:76–7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:652–3; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 398.

month. The meeting was to conclude the peace with the Mamluks that included the promise that Temür would not encroach on any lands under Mamluk control. Various amirs offered their counsel to the sultan, while al-Mutawakkil and the qadis also received a platform to sound out their opinions on the peace accord.⁸¹⁸ In the reply, the Mamluk chancery informed Temür that the sultan had met to confer with the caliph and the other reputable men of his regime and that after careful consideration they had agreed to accept the peace. The language of the letter allowed the chancery to convey to Temür that Faraj, (although officially a humiliated vassal), had a choice in the matter and was able to consult the caliph and other chief advisors.⁸¹⁹

Sedition tended to escalate quickly in Syria, and the resurgent threat of the amirs ultimately succeeded in freeing Damascus from Cairo's grip. Although the sultan's name was removed from the Friday sermon in many mosques of the city by Ramaḍān 807/March 1405, most continued to offer prayers in the name of al-Mutawakkil.⁸²⁰

By mid-Dhū al-Ḥijja 807/June 1405, when a vanguard of rebel Syrian amirs approached Egypt, Faraj met them at Raydāniyya.⁸²¹ The sultan lost the battle and hastily withdrew, leaving behind the Abbasid caliph, the qadis, 300 royal mamlūks and much of his own baggage which briefly fell into enemy hands until the sultan's forces recovered them after a counterattack.⁸²²

Believing himself in a more secure position, Faraj pardoned the majority of vanquished amirs while imprisoning others in Alexandria to break their power. The sultan reorganized his realm and hoped to pacify Nawrūz by making him governor of Damascus at the expense of the amir Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī.⁸²³ Nevertheless, the aggravated Syrian amirs regrouped once more and forced the sultan into hiding in Cairo as unrest grew.

The rebels successfully occupied the Cairo citadel on 25 Rabī' I 808/20 September 1405 but failed to agree on whom to name as sultan. After seizing al-Mutawakkil and the qadis, the amirs Yashbak and Baybars agreed on Barqūq's younger son 'Abd al-'Azīz who had already received the caliph's approval as successor to Faraj in accordance with Barqūq's testament. The

⁸¹⁸ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 4:301.

⁸¹⁹ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 193-4.

⁸²⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:314; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:116.

⁸²¹ The caliph departed with Faraj on 8 Dhū al-Qa'da 807/8 May 1405. See: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rikh*, 4:419.

⁸²² Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba includes more details surrounding the caliph's brief captivity, see: *Ta'rikh*, 4:421-3. See also: Ibn Hījī, *Ta'rikh*, 2:680-4; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:3:1163-4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:296; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:319-20; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:202-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:376-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:721-2.

⁸²³ For the career of Shaykh as a Mamluk amir and his subsequent rise to power, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:263-87.

caliph, qadis, and leading amirs administered the oath at the citadel and dressed ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in caliphal garb as al-Malik al-Manṣūr.⁸²⁴

Two months later Faraj emerged unexpectedly from hiding to recapture the citadel with fresh forces on the morning of 5 Jumāda II 808/28 November 1405.⁸²⁵ He reaffirmed his pledge with al-Mutawakkil and the qadis, and announced the deposition of his younger brother in preparation of his return to the throne.⁸²⁶

Al-Mutawakkil’s long reign ended a month later on 27 Rajab 808/January 18 1406.⁸²⁷ He left the caliphate by testament first to his son Aḥmad as al-Mu‘tamid ‘alā ’l-lāh but removed him in favor of another son, Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās.⁸²⁸ A grand state funeral displayed the popular esteem and adoration al-Mutawakkil enjoyed for decades among the populace. The caliph was then interred with his kinsmen at the family mausoleum near the Abbasid residence close to the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa.⁸²⁹

* * *

By the dawn of its second century in Cairo, the Abbasid caliphate achieved levels of political prestige, if not actual power, that neither sultans -- nor those who coveted the office -- could ignore.⁸³⁰ During the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the overall importance of the office rose in both domestic and external affairs. Dissident forces among the Mamluk amirs had even considered the caliph a viable candidate for the sultanate on multiple occasions in 778/1377,

⁸²⁴ Ibn Hījī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:698; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:2; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:319 (28 Ṣafar 808); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 12:331, 13:41-2; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:212-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:440; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:120; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:126; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:734-5; Wansbrough, “Farajī.”

⁸²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:48; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:129.

⁸²⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:48; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:120; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:740.

⁸²⁷ Several historians provide 27 Rajab as al-Mutawakkil’s date of death: Ibn Hījī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:717-8; al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 2:203; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:13, 23; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:343; idem, *Dhayl*, 119 (Sha‘bān 808); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:51; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:220. Elsewhere, however, Mamluk sources suggest a slew of alternate dates for the caliph’s death: al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:215 (Jumādā II 808); al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh*, 3:263 (17 Rajab 808); al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:294 (18 Rajab 808); al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:132 (20 Rajab 808). Several sources mention 28 Rajab: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:24; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:155; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:386 (Sha‘bān 808); idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:445; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:745.

⁸²⁸ Ibn Hījī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:717-8; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211, 3:295; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:343-4; idem, *Dhayl*, 119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:51; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:254; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 7:168; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:441, 445; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85. According to al-Sakhāwī, al-Mu‘tamid was returned to confinement by his father and remained incarcerated until death. See: *Daw’*, 2:102-3. For the succession contract naming al-‘Abbās the heir of al-Mutawakkil (which I discuss in Chapter 5), see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubh* 9:369-77; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:340-53.

⁸²⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 3:295; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:155.

⁸³⁰ Garcin, “Histoire,” 61.

784/1382, and 786/1384, though he was frequently punished with deposition and imprisonment for crossing the line (voluntarily or not) into the sphere of politics.

For forty years after the death of the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the Abbasid caliphate linked the slave-kings to the splendor of old Baghdad as well as the victorious legacies of Baybars and Qalāwūn. The only force to rival its ability to bestow legitimacy during the period was the allure of an *amīr kabīr* or *atābak al-‘asākir* acting as tutor to a Qalawunid prince.⁸³¹

As a fetishized personality the Abbasid caliph unified disparate mamlūk factions under a universal Islamic symbol and sacred lineage that sometimes transcended factional loyalties and overshadowed the House of Qalāwūn in its decline. Although individual mamlūks were loyal to the singular *ustādh* who trained and manumitted them, in theory, allegiance to the caliph was expected from all.

It has been suggested that Qalawunid charisma, even its vestiges, combined with the instability of the period, may have convinced al-Mutawakkil to turn away from opportunity and reject the sultanate.⁸³² Even so, there is reason to believe that the caliph was not frightened by the possible consequences of reaching for the sultanate. There is room enough to imagine him biding his time, the better to revive the power and glory of the early caliphate once the Qalawunids had sufficiently faded.⁸³³ The rise of Barqūq, however, thwarted any such hopes. Even so, for many Turkish amirs the caliph remained a more palatable alternative to the unwelcome Circassian sultan. It is not without significance that Barqūq took great pains to demonstrate to his detractors that the caliph was pleased with him.

With the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the position of the caliph began to receive opportunities to arbitrate between competing Mamluk factions. Although the caliph tended to be the mouthpiece for the sultan or dominant amir, rival parties often had to accept that the caliph represented “that which was most pleasing to God and the Prophet.” Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and later Faraj could do no better than send al-Mutawakkil to negotiate with the very amirs who claimed to rebel in his name.

As Broadbridge discovered, some reflections of the caliph’s significance in this period emerge from an assessment of the relationships of the amirs and sultans with governors and client rulers. In addition to caliphal titles which were sometimes granted to governors, caliphal banners were sent to supplement sultanic ones. Nevertheless, the names of individual caliphs did not appear on the coins of the period and the Abbasids appeared to matter little to provincial rulers.

⁸³¹ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 149-50.

⁸³² Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 86.

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, 86-7.

Indeed, the Qalawunid sultans interacted with clients and governors, not as “partners of the caliph,” but as the noble descendants of Qalāwūn.⁸³⁴

The Caliph-Sultan: Al-Musta‘īn billāh (808-16/1406-14)

In the days after the death of al-Mutawakkil, on 1 Sha‘bān 808/22 January 1406, the caliphate passed to his eldest son Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās born of the Turkish concubine Bāy Khātūn.⁸³⁵ In an investiture ceremony, Faraj robed the new caliph as al-Musta‘īn billāh with the symbols of office before granting him leave to return to the Abbasid residence.⁸³⁶

In the years between 808-15/1405-12, the recalcitrant Syrian amirs Nawrūz and Shaykh pursued their attempts to establish authority independent of the Mamluk sultan.⁸³⁷ Faraj continued his expeditions to subdue them as the Mamluk sultanate further descended into a ruinous civil war that threatened the economies of Egypt and Syria and fomented disaster in the major Syrian cities.⁸³⁸

The new caliph al-Musta‘īn and the chief qadis were regular participants in the sultan’s ceremonial processions. On one official outing, after having arrived in Syria on 24 Ṣafar 812/8 July 1409, the caliph and qadis read from long proclamations urging Damascenes to fight against the amir Shaykh.⁸³⁹

Initially defeated by Faraj in Syria on 22 Rabī‘ I 812/4 August 1409, Shaykh was obliged to seek the sultan’s forgiveness. Within a week a delegation consisting of al-Musta‘īn, the amir Taghrībirdī, and the *kātib al-sirr* Faṭḥ Allāh greeted Shaykh near the moat (*al-khandaq*) at the gateway near the citadel.⁸⁴⁰ As Taghrībirdī and Faṭḥ Allāh berated Shaykh for his rebellion

⁸³⁴ On the conspicuous absence of caliphal references on the coins of Mamluk vassals, see: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 150 note 53.

⁸³⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:343; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:255; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. Al-Ṣayrafī refers to him as al-Mu‘taṣim. See: *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:217. Bāy Khātūn may also have been the mother of the next two caliphs, al-Mu‘taḍid II and al-Mustakfi II. Just as Mamluk sources lack uniformity on the death date of al-Mutawakkil, there is likewise no consensus on the date of his son’s investiture: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:14 (4 Sha‘bān 808); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:60-1 (1 Sha‘bān); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:51 (1 Sha‘bān); al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404 (Rajab 808); al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 4:19 (Rajab 808); idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:382 (4 Sha‘bān); al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:132-3 (20 Rajab); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:747 (4 Sha‘bān).

⁸³⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:14; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786 (4 Sha‘bān); Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:51; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:133; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:133; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:747.

⁸³⁷ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:178, 195.

⁸³⁸ R. Kevin Jaques, *Authority, Conflict, and the Transmission of Diversity in Medieval Islamic Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 95.

⁸³⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:93, 99; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:423; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:182.

⁸⁴⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:104; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:86; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:183.

against the sultan, the Abbasid caliph, charged with reporting the details of Shaykh's explanation to the sultan, observed the conversation. The presence of the caliph appears to have lent an official, albeit silent, religious approval to Taghrībirdī's expressions of displeasure with Shaykh. Before finishing the meeting, the sultan's representatives accepted Shaykh's pledge of loyalty to their master.⁸⁴¹

Nevertheless, by 813/1410 Shaykh and Nawrūz resumed their defiance in Syria supported by some of Barqūq's former Zāhiriyya mamlūks. Quelling the unrest occupied the final two years of the sultanate of Faraj.⁸⁴² The caliph and qadis attended another summer expedition to Damascus in Rabī' I 813/July 1410 in which the sultan intended to fight Shaykh.⁸⁴³

By the end of the next year in Dhū al-Ḥijja 814/March 1412 Faraj embarked on what was to be his last campaign against the rebellious amirs in Syria.⁸⁴⁴ The sultan had prepared the mission for the better part of a year, and frequently visited his father's tomb complex outside Cairo to engage in pious acts including robing the caliph and other notables.⁸⁴⁵ By the end of the year the sultan made camp at Raydāniyya with al-Musta'īn and the four chief qadis. The location was strategically near the shrine of Barqūq, allowing more time for prayer and sacrifice. The sultan eventually left for battle at an auspicious moment chosen for him by his Sufi advisor Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn ibn Zuqqā'a.⁸⁴⁶

The situation deteriorated as many of the sultan's troops deserted in favor of Shaykh and Nawrūz amidst reports that Faraj was often too drunk to function coherently.⁸⁴⁷ At the start of 815/April 1412, victory appeared to be nigh for the rebel amirs, though without an agreeable candidate to replace the beleaguered sultan.⁸⁴⁸

The Caliph-Sultan (25 Muḥarram-1 Sha'bān 815/7 May – 6 November 1412)

⁸⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:86.

⁸⁴² In addition to taking up arms against the sultan and trying to unite the Syrian amirs against him, the amirs removed his name from the Damascus *khuṭba*. See: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 93.

⁸⁴³ al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:263-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:804.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:255; idem, *Manhal*, 6:283-4; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:292-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:471, 476; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:419; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:224-5.

⁸⁴⁵ al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:174; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:120; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:133; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:292-3.

⁸⁴⁶ al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:198; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:292. So confident in the *shaykh*'s promise of victory was Faraj, that he committed the fatal blunder of leaving part of his forces at Raydāniyya. Ibn Taghrībirdī suspected Ibn Zuqqā'a of collaborating with the other side. See: *Nujūm*, 13:136.

⁸⁴⁷ The alleged drunkenness of the sultan drew the attention of Mamluk chroniclers. See: Carl F. Petry, *The Criminal Underworld in a Medieval Islamic Society: Narratives from Cairo and Damascus under the Mamluks* (Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, 2012), 132-3.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:189; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:305-8; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:229.

Poised to consolidate their victory over Faraj, the alliance between the amirs Shaykh, Nawrūz, and another collaborator, Baktamur al-Zāhirī (known as Jilliḡ), quickly unraveled as each endeavored to seize the sultanate once the sultan was finally defeated. It became clear, however, that for the time being, an interim figurehead was necessary to prevent an exacerbation of the existing chaos. Opportunely, having been abandoned in al-Lajjūn by the fleeing sultan, the caliph al-Mustaʿīn and *kātib al-sirr* Faṭḥ Allāh had fallen into the hands of the rebel amirs who wasted no time in summoning Faṭḥ Allāh for his counsel on whom to appoint to the sultanate. Al-Mustaʿīn came to the fore as the most desirable contender, as the caliph had the potential to undermine critical support for Faraj, whose own popularity could never compete with the appeal of the black Abbasid standard.⁸⁴⁹ Al-Mustaʿīn, himself the son of a popular caliph, was also more appealing than the infant son of Faraj. Acting on that advice, Shaykh had al-Mustaʿīn brought before the amirs.⁸⁵⁰

Mamluk sources agree that al-Mustaʿīn vehemently opposed the suggestion at once. Unwilling to accept refusal, the amirs embarked on a campaign of persuasion. They initially sent Faṭḥ Allāh to the caliph, but al-Mustaʿīn could not be swayed due to his deep fear of deposition from the caliphate, or worse-- death, and the lingering dread that Faraj might somehow evade Shaykh and Nawrūz in Damascus, return to power, and punish the caliph for his treachery.⁸⁵¹ Faṭḥ

⁸⁴⁹ Even as late as Mamluk times, the black standard of the Abbasids remained a potent and unifying symbol. For a variety of examples describing public displays of the black banners of the Abbasid caliphate, see: Ibn Ḥijjī, *Taʾrīkh*, 1:455; Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍīʾa*, 2:134 (Arabic), 1:179 (English); Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:129, 3:201; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:36. The caliphal standard also retained its symbolic resonance in some literary specimens of the period, see: Adam Talib, “Woven Together as Though Randomly Strung: Variation in Collections of Naevi Poetry Compiled by al-Nuwayrī and al-Sarī al-Raffāʾ,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 28-30.

⁸⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:207-8, 214-5; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:203-4, 786; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:506-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:141, 145; idem, *Manhal*, 7:61; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256, 2:133-4; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:476; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:419. See also: P. M. Holt, “Al-Mustaʿīn (II) biʾllāh,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 7:723.

⁸⁵¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:214; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:507-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:147, 190; idem, *Manhal*, 761; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256, 2:134; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:420; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:823. Bernadette Martel-Thoumian suggested that Faṭḥ Allāh received the task of offering the sultanate to al-Mustaʿīn because, as *kātib al-sirr*, he was the highest-ranking civilian official and held a post that often received odd jobs by the

Allāh returned and advised the amirs that, “according to what [he] had observed of [al-Musta‘īn’s] refusal, it was impossible that he would ever consent” and that the amirs must pursue a different tack to finesse the compliance of the caliph.⁸⁵²

Increasingly vexed by al-Musta‘īn’s tenacity, the amirs approached the caliph’s non-Abbasid half-brother, the amir Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārakshāh al-Ṭāzī (d. 823/1420), a son of Bāy Khātūn and Mubārakshāh al-Ṭāzī, to persuade the caliph to assume the sultanate.⁸⁵³ In exchange for his cooperation, Shaykh and Nawrūz offered Ibn Mubārakshāh a second class amirate and the key position of *dawādār* to the new sultan. Ibn Mubārakshāh mounted a horse and set out to visit al-Musta‘īn, while a herald rode before him to preemptively proclaim the deposition of Faraj by the caliph and to issue bans against aiding and abetting the outlaw Mamluk sultan. The amirs sent an official document for al-Musta‘īn to sign which inventoried the offenses of Faraj and legitimized his deposition and removal by the caliph. Such assurances did little to ease the caliph’s anxiety over the possible return of Faraj, and al-Musta‘īn fiercely scolded Ibn Mubārakshāh for his meddling.⁸⁵⁴ Nevertheless, with Faraj weakened and besieged in Damascus, the caliph’s fears slowly abated. After final negotiations with Faṭḥ Allāh, al-Musta‘īn agreed to assume the sultanate with some reservation. One of his reportedly numerous caveats, was that if he were ever to be removed from the sultanate, al-Musta‘īn must at least retain the caliphate which all parties found agreeable.⁸⁵⁵

The qadis validated the unprecedented succession and al-Musta‘īn assumed office as sultan on 25 Muḥarram 815/7 May 1412.⁸⁵⁶ A *bay‘a* ceremony for the first ever caliph-sultan

Mamluks making him a likely intermediary during a vacuum of power. See: *Les civils et l’administration dans l’état militaire Mamlūk: (IXe/XVe siècle)* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1991), 43.

⁸⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:190.

⁸⁵³ On Ibn Mubārakshāh, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:543; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:165.

⁸⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:508; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:147, 190.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:147, 190; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:134; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:823.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:1008; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:213-4; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:212; Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, *Duwal al-Islām al-sharīfa al-bahīyya*, 92-3; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:507; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:147; idem, *Manhal*, 6:284; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404; idem, al-

followed so that the amirs could demonstrate fidelity and obedience.⁸⁵⁷ Importantly, the attendees swore that the caliph would have a free hand to act independently in matters of governance. The amirs arranged for the name of al-Mustaʿīn and news of his succession to the sultanate to be proclaimed in the streets of Damascus and the inhabitants recited prayers for him.⁸⁵⁸

The caliph's accession produced a new polarity in Mamluk politics, splitting the establishment between those who accepted the sultanate of al-Mustaʿīn, in opposition to former supporters of Faraj loyal to the House of Barqūq. The issue received lively debate, each side repudiating the other as rebels.⁸⁵⁹

With an improvised black "caliphal robe" confiscated from the orator (*khaṭīb*) of the Karīm al-Dīn mosque, Shaykh and his followers erected a makeshift throne for al-Mustaʿīn outside the building and stood before the caliph-sultan according to rank, with the exception of Nawrūz who was busy fighting the remainder of forces loyal to Faraj.⁸⁶⁰ In line with the customs of a new sultan and breaking with caliphal protocol, the amirs all kissed the ground at al-Mustaʿīn's feet.⁸⁶¹ The caliph-sultan retained his Abbasid regnal name. While Mamluk narrative sources do not often provide any new honorific as sultan, other sources indicate that al-Mustaʿīn also reigned as al-Malik al-ʿĀdil.⁸⁶²

Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:121; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:419; Ibn Iyās offers 27 Muḥarram as the date, see: *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:823.

⁸⁵⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:216, 219; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-ʿAynī, *al-Sayf al-muḥannad fī sīrat al-Malik al-Muʾayyad*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Cairo, 1967), 259-60; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:147; idem, *Manhal*, 6:284; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:823; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:508; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:420; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:823; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216.

⁸⁵⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:216; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:212; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des Mamelouks*, xxvi.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibn Ḥijjī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1008. On al-Mustaʿīn's "throne," see: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:216; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:508; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85.

⁸⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:216; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:212-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:191; idem, *Manhal*, 6:284-5. For Ibn Taghrībirdī's cultural commentary on the origins of this practice, see: *Nujūm*, 14:247.

⁸⁶² Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:507; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:61; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:85; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. That the caliph took on the sultan title al-ʿĀdil, see: Robert Irwin, "Factions in Medieval Egypt," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1986): 231; Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*, 77. Although Balog and Schultz did not mention the "al-ʿĀdil" title in their work on al-Mustaʿīn's coinage, the

Al-Musta‘īn followed the amirs on procession, as a herald proclaimed the end of the reign of Faraj and the succession of al-Musta‘īn, warning any supporters of Faraj to surrender within the week if they expected amnesty from the caliph-sultan.⁸⁶³ Al-Musta‘īn led the army further to al-Muṣallī before heading back to his previous position and ordered proclamations to be read in the eastern neighborhoods of Damascus.⁸⁶⁴

The caliph’s accession had apparently precipitated a minor spiritual crisis for large numbers of Damascenes loyal to Faraj who deserted the embattled sultan, in fear “of the results, in this world and the next, of disobedience to the Commander of the Faithful.”⁸⁶⁵ We are told that al-Musta‘īn then began to put his motto (‘*alāma*) on the decrees [a task reserved to the sultan, which he was] (*ṣāra al-Musta‘īn billāh yu‘allim ‘alā al-marāsīm*) and eased into certain sultanic prerogatives.⁸⁶⁶ Mamluk sources are unclear as to the nature of directives as well as the early power relationship between al-Musta‘īn and Shaykh, though they suggest that the caliph-sultan initially received full executive control over appointments and removals combined with the issuing of proclamations in Syria.⁸⁶⁷ Al-Musta‘īn wrote to the Egyptian amirs, demanded their submission as sultan, and announced his commitment to upholding religion by abolishing non-*sharī‘a* taxes (*maẓālim wa-mukūs*), a token gesture for any incoming sultan.⁸⁶⁸

caliph-sultan was alternately identified as “al-Sultān al-Malik al-‘Abbās,” see: Schultz, “The Silver Coinage of the Mamluk Caliph,” 213-7.

⁸⁶³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1;216; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:191; idem, *Manhal*, 6:285; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:86. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 93.

⁸⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:192.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:192.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:61.

⁸⁶⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:276. Kevin Jaques has demonstrated the intense politicization of the ‘*ulamā*’ at this time, noting that whenever Faraj, Nawrūz, or Shaykh gained control of a town, they appointed local qadis sympathetic to their cause at the expense of the other two rivals. Already by this time, religious scholars loyal to Nawrūz and Shaykh actively conspired as to how best to ease their candidate into the power vacuum presided over by al-Musta‘īn. See: *Authority, Conflict, and the Transmission of Diversity*, 95-7.

⁸⁶⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:209, 216-7; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:192; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:2:825. This was a fairly common practice for a sultan. Barqūq had abolished non-canonical taxes as a way of demonstrating piety. See: Wiederhold, “Zāhirī Revolt,” 215-6.

The caliph-sultan invested a new grand qadi for the Shāfi'ī rite in Egypt, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Bā'ūnī, to replace the influential Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 824/1421) who had remained in Damascus with Faraj as the latter desperately fought to maintain his position.⁸⁶⁹ Faraj and his supporters stepped up their efforts and even welcomed reinforcements among the amirs and fortress commanders sent by the *de facto* head of the Aq Qoyunlu Turkmen confederation Qara Yülük (805-39/1403-35).⁸⁷⁰ A proclamation instructed the caliph-sultan's army to aid the people in preparing for their advance and to fight the Aq Qoyunlu reserves with the same fervor as if they were a contingent sent by Temür himself.⁸⁷¹ In preparation, the amirs and mamlüks reaffirmed their commitment to al-Musta'in as caliph-sultan:

[They] pledged to the Commander of the Faithful that they would maintain their obedience to him and obey his commands, that they were pleased that he was ruler over them, that he should have absolute control of affairs devoid of reference to anyone, and that they would not make anyone sultan so long as he lived. They then kissed the ground before him and all submitted to the Commander of the Faithful al-Musta'in billāh.⁸⁷²

Mamluk sources support the idea that the caliph's presence proved a crucial element for Shaykh and Nawrūz in their ongoing struggle against Faraj, who in addition to his sizeable Turkmen following, enjoyed general popularity among the people. It was only out of fear of disobeying the caliph that many supporters abandoned Faraj.⁸⁷³

Despite Shaykh's access to caliphal authority and his growing influence in Damascus, Nawrūz, busy on campaign, remained content for the time being as he tried to secure political advantage. Shaykh sent Faṭḥ Allāh to Nawrūz to accept his pledge of loyalty to al-Musta'in. Nawrūz kissed the ground for the caliph-sultan and expressed joy that the Commander of the

⁸⁶⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:508; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:217; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:212; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:86; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:824. On 26 Ṣafar 815/7 June 1412 the caliph reinstalled al-Bulqīnī to the qadiship of Egypt after only a month. See: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:512; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:230; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:198-9.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193.

⁸⁷¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:509; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193. In this period the Aq Qoyunlu were vassals of Temür's son Shāhrukh.

⁸⁷² Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:1011; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:213; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:508; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:121; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230.

⁸⁷³ Ibn Ḥijjī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:1011; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:509-10; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:192-3. At this point, by late Muḥarram, early Ṣafar, Shaykh and Nawrūz were confident enough to send Qijmās al-Qarmī to Cairo with letters from the caliph and the amirs announcing the fall of Faraj and demanding their recognition of his deposition. See: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:306; Brinner, "Struggle for Power," 232; Garcin, "Circassian Mamlüks," 291.

Faithful had assumed “unrestricted authority.” Most likely delighted by anything that checked Shaykh’s power, Nawrūz stressed that al-Musta‘īn’s authority must not be curbed in any way and that the caliph-sultan must enjoy a free hand to take up matters of state.⁸⁷⁴

The amirs learned that supporters of Faraj planned to rescue him from Nawrūz’s siege by setting the walls of the Ḥajjāj castle ablaze thereby allowing the embattled sultan to reach Turkmen allies waiting on the other side. Shaykh rushed al-Musta‘īn to Nābitiyya to witness what appeared to be the last major battle against the soon-to-be deposed sultan.⁸⁷⁵ In the end Faraj escaped again to the Damascus citadel after several of his amirs, including his commander-in-chief Damurdash, abandoned him to rally beneath the black banner of the caliph-sultan.⁸⁷⁶

Encouraged by the unifying charisma of the Abbasid caliphate which held a magnetic draw on enemy forces, the amirs moved on to Damascus in pursuit of Faraj and lodged al-Musta‘īn just outside the city.⁸⁷⁷ After a brief siege, Faraj sued for peace on 10 Ṣafar 815/22 May 1412. Ibn Mubārakshāh delivered an oath signed by the amirs to Faraj, who after a few failed attempts to restart hostilities had no choice but submission. The amirs granted amnesty and forced him to concede that al-Musta‘īn would remain sultan.⁸⁷⁸

A conference of amirs, scholars, and jurists convened at al-Musta‘īn’s temporary residence in Damascus at the Palace of the Deputy (*Qaṣr al-Nā’ib*) to discuss the fate of Faraj. Amidst intense deliberations, Shaykh, who had previously tasted the clemency of the deposed sultan, favored deportation to Alexandria over execution. If Shaykh became sultan, allowing Faraj to survive might prove useful in applying pressure on potential political rivals such as Nawrūz or even al-Musta‘īn. Nawrūz, on the other hand, who had absorbed the brunt of the recent fighting against Faraj, lusted for blood and was likewise inclined towards any option that offered potential to confound Shaykh’s interests.⁸⁷⁹ As for al-Musta‘īn, his anxieties concerning Faraj were well-known and it seems reasonable to suspect that the caliph-sultan used his influence with the ‘*ulamā*’ to secure a death sentence for the ousted sultan. The Ḥanafī qadi Ibn

⁸⁷⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:213; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193.

⁸⁷⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:221; idem, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193-4.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:195; idem, *Manhal*, 6:285; Emmanuel Piloti, *L’Égypte au commencement du quinzième siècle d’après le traité d’Emmanuel Piloti de Crète, incipit 1420*, ed. P. Dopp (Cairo, 1950), 12-3.

⁸⁷⁷ Meanwhile, besieged in the citadel, the amirs sent orders to Faraj claiming that the caliph had ordered his deposition and arrest. Upon reading them, his anger intensified and he shouted, “I neither hear nor obey, nor will I descend!” See: al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:308-9.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:197; Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 13. Al-Ṣayrafi (*Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:308) names 9 Ṣafar 815 as the day of importance, and the caliph who became sultan: al-Mu‘taṣim billāh al-‘Abbāsī ibn al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh Muḥammad.

⁸⁷⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:223, 225; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:510-1; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:198; idem, *Manhal*, 6:285; Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 13.

al-‘Adīm likewise advocated for execution and appealed to the opinion of the caliph-sultan in arguments against jurists and amirs favoring exile. With support from al-Musta‘īn, Nawrūz and Ibn al-‘Adīm, the pro-execution party soon counted Faṭḥ Allāh among their ranks. Ibn al-‘Adīm testified to the legality of the decision and received legal validation for his statement.⁸⁸⁰ Several days later Faraj was humiliated, tortured, and made to suffer a grisly death on 16 Ṣafar 815/28 May 1412.⁸⁸¹ The highly contentious execution became a sore point for many as Faraj had already surrendered on acceptable terms.⁸⁸²

During the period of transition between Faraj and al-Musta‘īn, in addition to living quarters the amirs established an interim court for the caliph-sultan at the *Qaṣr al-Nā‘ib* in Damascus which hosted weekly meetings for some time after the execution. While in session, Shaykh and Nawrūz flanked the caliph-sultan, as other amirs sat according to the dictates of previously established Mamluk court practice.⁸⁸³ Initially, Shaykh and Nawrūz both agreed to escort al-Musta‘īn to Cairo with the understanding that they would wait on him: Shaykh as *amir kabīr* and *atābak al-‘asākīr*; Nawrūz as *atābak* of the guard of the armies, and the pair divvied up *iqṭā‘*s and finalized living arrangements.⁸⁸⁴ On 25 Ṣafar 815/6 June 1412 Shaykh, through successful reverse psychology, duped Nawrūz into remaining in Syria. Al-Musta‘īn named Nawrūz deputy of Syria after removing Baktamur Jilliq, who was to return to Cairo.⁸⁸⁵ With Nawrūz invested over all of Syria, Mamluk domains were roughly partitioned in half.⁸⁸⁶ Nawrūz received full rights over the cities of Syria with the power to assign amirates and *iqṭā‘*s as he pleased, provided he informed al-Musta‘īn of *de facto* appointments for purposes of issuing official diplomas. This afforded Shaykh the free hand in Egypt he had desired all along.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:507; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:86; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:419; Piloti, *L’Egypte*, 13.

⁸⁸¹ Perhaps as a reward for delivering the caliph’s cooperation, Ibn Mubārakshāh served as one of the executioners of Faraj. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:223-4; Ibn Hījī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:1012-3; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:148, 197-8; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuḥat al-nufūs*, 2:309-10 (17 Ṣafar); al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:230, 232-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:420; Piloti, *L’Egypte*, 13; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. See also: Levanoni, “Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate,” 385; Beaumont, “Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society,” 223-4.

⁸⁸² On the surrender of Faraj: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:510. See also: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 182; Beaumont, “Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society,” 207-8.

⁸⁸³ It may have been the case that the amirs set their individual ambitions aside in hopes that one of them could oust the caliph, which, given his widespread support and popularity, would not be easy. See: Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājī, *Anmāt min al-ḥayāt al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya wa-al-ijtimā‘iyya fī ṣalṭanat al-mamālīk fī al-qarnayn al-thāmin wa-al-tāsi’ al-hijriyyayn/al-rābi’ ‘ashar wa-al-khāmis ‘ashar al-mīlādiyyayn* (Kuwait: University of Kuwait, 1995), 23.

⁸⁸⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:213; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:508; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:199-200; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:233-4.

⁸⁸⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:213; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:286; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:134; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:86; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:234; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:477; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:420; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:824.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:200; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:234.

Early during his time as sultan in Syria and later in Cairo, and seemingly heedless of Shaykh's true ambitions, al-Musta'in organized his government by selecting or deposing ministers and amirs. To all appearances, the caliph-sultan faced no restrictions in shoring up his administration as he saw fit. This freedom may have encouraged the impression that the caliph's sultanate was genuine and helped ease some of his initial misgivings.⁸⁸⁷ Confident in his control of affairs, the caliph-sultan expressed his orders to the Turkmen, Druze, and bedouin thusly:

From the servant of God and his *walī*, the *imām* al-Musta'in billāh, caliph of the Lord of the Worlds,⁸⁸⁸ cousin of the Master of the Prophets; the one to whom obedience is incumbent upon all creatures- God strengthen the faith through his preservation.⁸⁸⁹

The caliph-sultan sent his second communiqué to Cairene notables and the orators of the three important city mosques: Ibn Ṭulūn, al-Ḥākim, and al-Azhar. Mosque officials read the letters from the *minbars* and announced that Faraj had been defeated by the caliph.⁸⁹⁰ According to some sources, the people rejoiced in the markets and called out for victory and aid to the Commander of the Faithful.⁸⁹¹

A missive to Cairo dated 4 Rabī' I/14 June contained the earliest commands of al-Musta'in including an order for the release of amirs imprisoned at Alexandria and a directive for Asanbughā, master of the armory (*al-zaradkāsh*), to prepare to surrender the citadel.⁸⁹² Although the chronicles fail to explain the politics behind such moves, it appears likely that al-Musta'in was preparing -- or being directed to prepare -- the ground for a smooth changeover from Faraj's regime to one more receptive to directives from himself or Shaykh. Some coins struck in al-Musta'in's name do not appear to mention the sultanic title.⁸⁹³

⁸⁸⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:61; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:234-5.

⁸⁸⁸ Ṭarkhān believed the title, *khalīfat rabb al-'ālamīn* may have appeared here for the first time in correspondence from a Cairo caliph to an amir. See: *Miṣr*, 64.

⁸⁸⁹ Al-Qalqashandī also adds: "(God) blessed Islam and the Muslims with him, to a noble abode (or lofty council)," see: *Ma'āthir*, 3:264-5; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:230-1, 275. Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:512; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:201; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 404; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:86; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:234.

⁸⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:230; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:477.

⁸⁹¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:509; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:232; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:86.

⁸⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:231; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:201-2; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:235.

⁸⁹³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:263; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:446; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 404; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. According to Balog, al-Musta'in's coins, with the exception of his Cairo dirhams, styled the caliph-sultan as "*amīr al-mu'minīn*" or "*al-imām al-a'zam*." Some coins may also have included the phrase *khallada Allāh mulkahu* as well as the caliph's (?) heraldry which resembles an upturned ribbon. See: *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans*, 296-8. In addition to the gold and silver coins mentioned by Balog, Warren Schultz mentions copper as well. The first silver reforms in the Mamluk sultanate occurred during the short reign of al-Musta'in and his silver coins are instantly recognizable because of their higher silver content and the thin flan design which later dominated fifteenth century Mamluk coinage. See: "The Silver Coinage of the Mamluk Caliph and Sultan al-Musta'in Bi'llah (815/1412)," in Bruno Callegger and Arianna D'Ottone (eds.) *The 2nd Simone Assemani Symposium on*

Al-Musta‘īn, Shaykh, and Baktamur Jiliq set out for Egypt on 8 Rabī‘ I 815/18 June 1412.⁸⁹⁴ Nawrūz lingered in Damascus for a week before moving on to Aleppo.⁸⁹⁵ Further evidence of al-Musta‘īn’s alertness to the gravitas of his new position comes from a decree inscribed in his name addressing a tax repeal in Gaza.⁸⁹⁶ Addressed to the people of Gaza, the caliph-sultan, employed his own emblem and coat of arms in the middle of the inscription, apparently intending to correct the injustices of his predecessor:

In the name of God Most Merciful Most Beneficent. A decree of the venerable sublime *amīr al-mu‘minīn*, the great *imām*, descendant of the Prophet, al-Musta‘īnī, God increase and honor him: the repeal of earlier taxes from the days of sultan Faraj imposed on the inhabitants of Gaza on vineyards and orchards and agriculture and [let there be] no new introduction imposed upon them and no restoration of [illegal or non-canonical] tax collection upon them. “Then whoever changes it after hearing it, the sin shall be upon those who make the change.”⁸⁹⁷ This being on the 18th of the month of Rabī‘ I the year 815 (28 June 1412). Praise be to God alone. God bless our master Muḥammad, his family and companions and grant them salvation.⁸⁹⁸

Leaving Syria on 18 Rabī‘ I 815/28 June 1412, al-Musta‘īn and Shaykh arrived in Cairo with the army some weeks later on 2 Rabī‘ II 815/12 July 1412 and ascended to the citadel after passing through the marvelously decorated city and calling again for the removal of non-*sharī‘* taxes.⁸⁹⁹ Ecstatic crowds of Egyptians flocked to welcome the caliph-sultan and the amirs of the city stood along his path adorned in their best clothes.⁹⁰⁰ People were eager to offer him assistance, allured by the prospect of aiding the Commander of the Faithful. To the worried astonishment of Shaykh, the caliph-sultan moved into the sultan’s palace in the citadel forcing

Islamic Coins, (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 2010), 212-3. For the political conditions which led to changes in Mamluk silver and coin production during the reign of al-Musta‘īn, see: Jere L. Bacharach, “Circassian Monetary Policy: Silver,” *Numismatic Chronicle* 11 (1971): 272-5. See also: Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 2:53-5.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibn Hījī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:1015; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:512; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:228, 231; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:202; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:235; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:420-1 (2 Rabī‘ II); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:825.

⁸⁹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:231; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:512-4.

⁸⁹⁶ L. A. Mayer, “A Decree of the Caliph al-Musta‘īn Billāh,” *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 11 (1945): 27-9; Maḥmūd ‘Alī ‘Aṭā Allāh, *Niyābat Ghazza fī al-‘ahd al-Mamlūkī* (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1986), 236-7; M. M. Sadek, *Die mamlukische Architektur der Stadt Gaza* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1991), 98-9. See also: Garcin, “Circassian Mamlūks,” 303. The returning party of Shaykh and al-Musta‘īn appear to have reached Gaza by mid-Rabī‘ I 815/June 1412. See: al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:311.

⁸⁹⁷ Qur’ān, 2:181.

⁸⁹⁸ Mayer, “A Decree of the Caliph al-Musta‘īn Billāh,” 27-9; Sadek, *mamlukische Architektur*, 98-9.

⁸⁹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:512-3; al-‘Aynī, *al-Sayf al-muḥannad*, 303; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:311; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:286; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:134; al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn*, 2:86; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:235-6; idem, *Nuzhat al-asāṭīn fī man waliya Miṣr min al-salāṭīn* (Cairo, 1987), 125; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:825.

⁹⁰⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:214; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:311; Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 94-5.

him to settle in at the royal stables near the Gate of the Chain.⁹⁰¹ That al-Musta‘īn had not returned to his family’s traditional dwelling near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa alarmed Shaykh, who feared that he truly “intended to follow in the path of the sultan and depart from the path of the caliphs.”⁹⁰²

Joy in Cairo over the return of authority to the caliphate seemed genuine, as the masses celebrated. From his post as orator of al-Azhar mosque, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī recited a lengthy *qaṣīda* in which he praised Shaykh for having restored the “stolen power” to the caliphate.⁹⁰³ The caliph-sultan was not strictly involved in the business of running the government, however, and had time enough to participate in the wedding festivities of his sister-in-law, Bint al-Burhān al-Muhallī with great ceremonial.⁹⁰⁴

After his arrival in Cairo, the caliph-sultan’s fortunes quickly dwindled as Shaykh, rather than taper the caliph-sultan’s power gradually, usurped it directly. Indeed chroniclers were quick to acknowledge that al-Musta‘īn was sultan in name only.⁹⁰⁵

Settled in the city, Shaykh set about the sabotage and destabilization of al-Musta‘īn in several ways: he cancelled the ceremonial procession traditionally held for new sultans and instead held a small service for the caliph-sultan at his own residence, citing journey fatigue as the reason most men would be unable to attend.⁹⁰⁶ Stifling al-Musta‘īn’s inaugural excitement was a great blow to the caliph-sultan’s prestige and a calculated deflation of the public’s unabashed delight at his accession. In the resulting confusion, government officials in search of reassignment were redirected to Shaykh’s door rather than the caliph-sultan.⁹⁰⁷ Al-Musta‘īn apparently received no new subordinates in Cairo other than the initial entourage he had taken to

⁹⁰¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma‘āthir*, 2:206; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:229, 232-3; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:786, 4:1:327; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:513; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:286, 7:61; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:134; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:311; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:477; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:421; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 406; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:235-6; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:825. Shaykh had taken up quarters at the stables in Damascus.

⁹⁰² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:233; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:513; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:202; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256, 2:134; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:477; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:421; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:825. It did not go unnoticed that the caliph, perhaps figuratively as well as literally, even ate “that which sultans were accustomed to eating.” See: al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:214.

⁹⁰³ Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 64.

⁹⁰⁴ This wedding may have taken place in Rabī‘ I 815/June 1412 before the caliph’s departure from Syria. See: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:513.

⁹⁰⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:62; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:827. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 95.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:202.

⁹⁰⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:233; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:202-3; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:236; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:824.

Syria before his sultanate.⁹⁰⁸ He was also barred from looking over and selecting the best mamlūks of his predecessor for his own household; a perk reserved for new Mamluk sultans.⁹⁰⁹

Shaykh cast pretenses aside a week later, although he allowed ceremonies to commence in the caliph-sultan's castle on 8 Rabī' II 815/18 July 1412. Al-Musta'īn sat high atop a throne but came down as the amirs entered and it quickly became apparent that the real focus of the ceremony was Shaykh. In the first major blow to his illusory hold on government, the caliph-sultan was forced to formally invest Shaykh both as *amīr kabīr* and *atābak al-'asākir* in Egypt, thereby making massive ceremonial concessions of ruling power. At the meeting Shaykh received fancy, honorific *ṭirāz* garments along with the title "*niẓām al-mulk*."⁹¹⁰ Although Shaykh actively worked to undermine al-Musta'īn's authority, he permitted the caliph-sultan to continue making appointments for a time, though always with the goal of rooting out unfriendly or uncooperative amirs from the previous administration to shore up his own.⁹¹¹ The limitations and restraints on his authority began to weigh heavily on al-Musta'īn who slowly became aware of his status as Shaykh's prisoner.⁹¹² Al-Suyūṭī describes how the process may have occurred:

When the amirs were released from service at the palace [with the caliph-sultan], they returned to the service of Shaykh at the stables and paid their respects [before] carrying out administration in his presence. Then [Shaykh's] secretary (*dawādār*) waited on al-Musta'īn whose signature was attached to royal mandates and letters. It became clear that the caliph was not empowered to attach the sign manual to a document until it had been shown to Shaykh. The caliph was now in trepidation: his heart strained and alarmed.⁹¹³

Shaykh continued to assume sultanic prerogatives, and on 9 Rabī' II/19 July reviewed Faraj's mamlūks and *iqṭā's* and redistributed them among his own mamlūks.⁹¹⁴ To further pin down al-Musta'īn, Shaykh assigned his secretary (*dawādār*) Jaqmaq al-Arghūnshāwī officially to

⁹⁰⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:446; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:233; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:236. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 95.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:204.

⁹¹⁰ "The organizer of the kingdom," or *Niẓām al-Mulk*, had also been the title of the famous Seljuq wazīr (d. 485/1092). See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:263; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:233-4; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:514; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:203-4; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:313; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:477; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 406; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:89, 121; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:236. See also: Holt, "al-Musta'īn (II) bi'llāh."

⁹¹¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:85-6; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:235. See also: Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 95.

⁹¹² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:204; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 406.

⁹¹³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 406. See also: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:446. For more on the alleged emotional condition of the caliph: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:203; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:89; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 182. The *dawādār* was a high Mamluk official, according to Holt, the "channel of communication" between a sultan and his chancery. See: "Chancery Clerk," 671; idem, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260-1290): Treaties of Baybars & Qalāwūn with Christian Rulers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 58 note 3.

⁹¹⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:203; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:314 (2 Rabī' II).

serve as secretary to the caliph-sultan, but in reality to spy on, isolate, and frustrate him at every turn.⁹¹⁵ Shaykh also instructed his agent to keep tabs on the caliph-sultan's previous secretary, his half-brother Ibn Mubārakshāh.⁹¹⁶ After only two and a half months as sultan, al-Mustaʿīn found himself sequestered once more with his family in the extensive network of citadel castles, barred from meeting anyone without Shaykh's approval and consumed by regret:

[Al-Mustaʿīn's] breast grew heavy when the people (*al-nās*) failed to refer to him; when repentance was of no avail he regretted that he had entered into the affair at all. He was unable to speak of it for none of the amirs or others would aid him, and so he suffered in silence.⁹¹⁷

The caliph was not alone in remorse. As news of Shaykh's activities and swelling influence in Egypt reached Nawrūz, he too began to lament his decision to remain in Syria, wrongly believing that Shaykh valued it above Egypt.⁹¹⁸ The *coup de grâce* came on 16 Jumādā I 815/24 August 1412, when Shaykh commissioned an 'ahd diploma commissioned on behalf of al-Mustaʿīn that delegated "everything beyond the throne (*sarīr*) of the caliphate" to Shaykh as he took a distinguished seat in the Ḥarrāqa pavilion of the royal stables before the qadis and heads of state.⁹¹⁹ Al-Mustaʿīn remained caliph, but was barred from meaningful political activity. Shaykh maintained his show of allegiance to the caliph and even ordered caliphal diplomas from al-Mustaʿīn on 24 Jumādā I/1 September to affirm Syrian viceroys appointed by Nawrūz.⁹²⁰

To be sure, Shaykh was sultan in all but name in Egypt, but still had to share Cairo with a powerful rival like the amir Baktamur Jilliḡ, who posed a more immediate threat than Nawrūz in Syria. Fortune smiled on Shaykh when a scorpion bite claimed the life of Baktamur Jilliḡ and left

⁹¹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:234, idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:204; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:514; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:314, 316; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:828. Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 95.

⁹¹⁶ Shaykh honored his promise to grant Ibn Mubārakshāh a second tier *iqṭāʿ* and make him secretary to al-Mustaʿīn, but as things looked increasingly grim for the caliph-sultan, he became quite vocal against Shaykh's mistreatment of his half-brother. After the ouster of al-Mustaʿīn, Shaykh relieved Ibn Mubārakshāh of his *iqṭāʿ* and isolated him until his death. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:165; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256.

⁹¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:514; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:204; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:314; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:828. See also: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 182.

⁹¹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:234; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:205.

⁹¹⁹ Ibn Ḥijjī claimed that the 'ahd commissioned in the name of al-Mustaʿīn for Shaykh was read at al-Azhar. See: *Taʾrīkh*, 2:1025. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:239; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:515; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:205; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. For the text of the 'ahd document itself, see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:120-8.

⁹²⁰ Al-ʿAynī, *al-Sayf al-muhannad*, 314-21; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:205-6; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:135; al-Malaṭī, *Nuzhat al-asāṭīn*, 18, 124-5.

the way to ascendancy clear some weeks later on 8 Jumādā II/15 September. Predicting Shaykh's next move, Nawrūz convened his amirs and prepared to act.⁹²¹

Unaware of the eclipse of the caliph-sultan's power in Cairo, authorities in the Ḥijāz ordered prayers in honor of al-Mustaʿīn at the great mosque in Mecca on 23 Jumādā II/30 September and also over the holy well of Zamzam.⁹²² The caliph-sultan's name was also mentioned at Friday prayers from the *minbars* of Mecca and Medina. No previous Cairene Abbasid had received such distinction; in fact, the last Abbasid caliph to be prayed for publicly in the Ḥijāz was al-Mustaʿīm of Baghdad in the years prior to 656/1258.⁹²³ In Dhū al-Qaʿda 815/February 1413 Shaykh ordered the halt of prayers for al-Mustaʿīn in Mecca and prayers to be made in his name alone.⁹²⁴

Emboldened by the death of his nearest rival, Shaykh prepared to remove al-Mustaʿīn from the sultanate and put forth the idea to his amirs who vowed obedience but differed in their individual opinions.⁹²⁵ On 1 Shaʿbān/6 November, preparations for Shaykh's coronation began and the *kātib al-sirr* Faṭḥ Allāh was tapped to address a crowd at the royal stables, deliberately despairing of the practicality of "caliphal" rule:

Conditions are distressful; the name "caliph" is unknown to the people of the districts of Egypt; affairs will not proceed properly unless there is again a sultan according to custom.⁹²⁶

The assembly testified both to their satisfaction with Shaykh as sultan and the deposition of the caliph. Shaykh, garbed in Abbasid black, was dubbed al-Malik al-Muʾayyad on 1 Shaʿbān/6 November.⁹²⁷ As Shaykh ascended the palace of the sultan, the caliph was escorted off the premises to a new residence outside the Sitāra Gate (*Bāb al-Sitāra*).⁹²⁸

⁹²¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:240; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:206-8; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:240; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:827.

⁹²² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:240; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:241.

⁹²³ Ibid. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 92. In all likelihood, the name of al-Mustaʿīn was mentioned in the prayers of the holy places of the Ḥijāz for five months, until it was discontinued in Dhū al-Qaʿda 815/February 1413 and prayers instead made for Shaykh. See: al-Ḥājjī, *Anmāt*, 24.

⁹²⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:519. See also: Ilisch, "Beiträge zur mamlukischen Numismatik V," 40.

⁹²⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:206.

⁹²⁶ Ibn Ḥajar was apparently an eyewitness. See: *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:516; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:243-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:206; idem, *Manhal*, 6:287; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 406; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:828. Shaykh rewarded Faṭḥ Allāh, briefly, with greater prominence in his regime: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:237, 242.

⁹²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:244; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:204; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:206-7, 14:1; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:317; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:242-3; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:421; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:827-8, 2:3-4.

⁹²⁸ Al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:317.

The qadis had been present but the caliph did not attend. In need of caliphal sanction for the move, Shaykh ordered the qadis and *kātib al-sirr* to take the caliph's testimony at his house.⁹²⁹ Al-Musta'īn, aware of the danger of deposition, attempted to stall and secure assurances to safeguard his caliphate. Angrily, he refused to testify that delegating the sultanate to Shaykh had been a free decision.⁹³⁰ Some sources depict the caliph as somewhat antagonistic towards the qadis, requesting that he be allowed to leave the citadel and return to his former home. In an attempt to bargain, al-Musta'īn tried to arrange for Shaykh to publicly swear loyalty to him as caliph, in exchange for firm support for the sultan's causes and aid against his foes.⁹³¹ Largely unimpressed with the qadis' report and uninterested in negotiating with a caliph whose days were numbered, Shaykh ordered al-Musta'īn to remain under guard in the citadel and return to his traditional role as caliph.⁹³² Nevertheless, the sultan permitted the caliph to return to his apartments in the citadel some days later in which he lived for a period with his family, barred from contact with the outside world.⁹³³

Nawrūz meanwhile attempted to capitalize on confusion in Cairo by throwing his support behind al-Musta'īn as legitimate sultan and carried out a rebellion in the name of "justice for the caliph-sultan."⁹³⁴ In early 816/1413 Nawrūz ordered the caliph's name to be struck on coins, mentioned at Friday sermons in Syria, and frequently insulted Shaykh in their mutual correspondence by referring to him not as "Sultan al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad," but with appellations implying his subservience to "Imām al-Musta'īn," much to Shaykh's exasperation.⁹³⁵ From Damascus Nawrūz rallied forces to unseat Shaykh in the name of the caliph. Nawrūz summoned subordinate amirs from Aleppo and Tripoli and in their presence assembled local qadis to discuss the legality of Shaykh's imprisonment of al-Musta'īn and usurpation of the sultanate.⁹³⁶ Although

⁹²⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:827.

⁹³⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:244; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:446; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:62; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:256, 2:134; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:242.

⁹³¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 406; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:242.

⁹³² Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:242; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:827; Piloti, *L'Egypte*, 13-4.

⁹³³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:244; idem, *Durar al-'uqūd*, 2:214; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:516; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:478; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:242-3; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. The caliph and his family were likely stationed in a private residence in the citadel, and later interred at a tower near the citadel gate. In the period between tower incarceration and exile to Alexandria, Shaykh may have revoked the caliph's stipend. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 406; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:316-7.

⁹³⁴ Nawrūz had insisted on the rule of al-Musta'īn since the beginning of his sultanate, and had no reason to leave Syria so long as the caliph-sultan remained sultan, at least in name. See: al-Ḥajjī, *Anmāt*, 24.

⁹³⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:232, 255-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:7; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:137. Mamluk sources refer to these coins as "*Nawrūzī dīnārs*" which imply that Nawrūz, rather than the caliph, ordered them to be minted. See: Schultz, "The Silver Coinage of the Mamluk Caliph," 211.

⁹³⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89.

Mamluk sources dispute the outcome of the hearing.⁹³⁷ Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājī has suggested that the qadis may have deliberately adjourned without reaching a definitive answer for fear that issuing a fatwa describing the deposition of the caliph from the sultanate as illegal merely on grounds that al-Mustaʿīn had first been a caliph, carried the implication that all previous and subsequent Mamluk sultans (weak or strong) had ruled illegally as usurpers. Also, many of the Syrian scholars may have been worried about the chance that Shaykh might regain control in Syria and later punish those who had denounced his sultanate.⁹³⁸

Perhaps concerned that Nawrūz and al-Mustaʿīn might be conspiring against him, Shaykh began a purge of those he suspected of sympathy for Nawrūz, including Faṭḥ Allāh whom he arrested and aggressively tortured. Shaykh then convened his own council of amirs and qadis and explained that the times called for “a Turkish sultan to stand and suppress the people of sedition and rectify the matter [now] in his hands.” Shaykh worked to convince the Cairo council that the threat of *fitna* was sufficient to remove al-Mustaʿīn “to preserve the blood of the Muslims and keep corruption from the flock.”⁹³⁹ Taking on the caliphate issue directly, Shaykh summoned the caliph’s brother Dāwūd to the citadel on 16 Dhū al-Ḥijja 816/9 March 1414 and cloaked him in black before the four qadis.⁹⁴⁰ Dāwūd did not receive *bayʿa* at that time (nor was al-Mustaʿīn formally deposed), though he was named Abī al-Faṭḥ al-Muʿtaḍid billāh and recognized by Shaykh’s court as acting caliph for the next three years.⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Maʿāthir*, 2:206. Ibn Taghrībirdī claims the group adjourned without reaching a solid verdict (*Nujūm*, 14:5-6), while al-Suyūṭī, ever the caliphal advocate, declares that the assembly condemned Shaykh’s unlawful actions (*Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 406).

⁹³⁸ Al-Ḥājī, *Anmāt*, 27-8.

⁹³⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:518; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:5; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:318-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:244; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 65.

⁹⁴⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:273-4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:15; al-ʿAynī, *al-Sayf al-muhannad*, 321; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207, 14:16; idem, *Manhal*, 6:295; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257-8, 2:135; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:334; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:425; idem, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyya, 1972), 25; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89-90. Born sometime after 750/1349-50, al-Muʿtaḍid may have been another son of Bāy Khātūn, though other sources name him as the son of a different Turkish slave, Kazal (Kuzel). See: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:89; idem, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 406-7. The sources disagree over the date of al-Muʿtaḍid’s robing: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:302, 7:62 (16 Dhū al-Ḥijja 816); al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:261 (17 Dhū al-Ḥijja), 5:144; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:11-2 (12 Dhū al-Ḥijja). See also: Piloti, *L’Egypte*, 14; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216, 218.

⁹⁴¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:273-4; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:15; al-ʿAynī, *al-Sayf al-muhannad*, 321; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:295, 7:63; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:135; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:489; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 25; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:216. It is difficult to surmise the exact arrangement of al-Mustaʿīn’s caliphate. Some historians date the beginning of al-Muʿtaḍid II’s caliphate to Dhū al-Ḥijja 816/February 1414, but al-Mustaʿīn was never formally deposed as he himself continued to claim in Alexandria. Historians agree that Shaykh exiled the former caliph-sultan from Cairo in 819/1417 but his official position, or if he held one at all, is unclear. (This was likely the cause of the confusion on the *minbars*). Nevertheless, al-Maqrīzī begins the year 816/1413-4 by saying “the caliph is al-Mustaʿīn billāh who is forbidden from leaving.” See: *Sulūk*, 4:1:255. Al-Maqrīzī begins 817/1414-5 and 818/1415-6 by

This new cleavage between caliphate and sultanate and the uncertainty over who, in fact, *was* caliph and sultan, precipitated a minor crisis for deliverers of the Friday *khuṭba*. The traditional formula had involved praying for the reigning sultan by reciting his agnomen or patronymic (*kunya*, i.e. Abū al-‘Abbās) and his honorific title or regnal name (*laqab*, i.e. al-Musta‘īn). The turmoil and turnover at the citadel had rendered it unclear whether al-Musta‘īn or his brother al-Mu‘taḍid II was acting caliph. To add to the confusion in this period, al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh’s government officially barred preachers from praying for any caliph by name in what al-Maqrīzī denounced as an illegal “vacancy” (*shughūr*) in the caliphate. Thus some mosque orators changed the formula to “O Lord, please maintain the righteousness of the caliph (*aṣlah al-khalīfa*),” while others asked God to “support the Abbasid caliphate by strengthening our master the sultan.”⁹⁴² It was evident that mosque orators, at least, were unhappy about the caliph’s demotion from the sultanate and they remained sympathetic to the broader notion of the caliphate, regardless of which brother held office.⁹⁴³

By Ramaḍān 815/November-December 1412, Shaykh moved the caliph from the palace and settled him in one of the citadel apartments for more than a year with his family.⁹⁴⁴ In Ramaḍān 817/November-December 1414, while his brother Dāwūd joined Shaykh in a massive return parade from Syria, al-Musta‘īn remained confined in the citadel residence with his family and servants.⁹⁴⁵ The dishonored caliph was then moved to the tower in which Barqūq had imprisoned his father and lived in extremely tight confinement until he was sent off to Alexandria

acknowledging al-Mu‘taḍid II as “caliph of the time.” See: *Sulūk*, 4:1:279, 298. According to al-Malaṭī, the name of al-Musta‘īn remained in the caliphate from the day of his deposition as sultan, until Shaykh needed a caliph to bring to Syria and he selected Dāwūd al-Mu‘taḍid and named him caliph. See: *Nayl al-amal*, 3:261. It was indeed a bizarre moment (considering the explicit stance taken by Sunni political theory regarding multiple *imāms*) in which there were *two* Abbasid caliphs in Egypt. To explain Shaykh’s appointment of a second caliph, Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥājjī suggested that the sultan may have wished to defy Nawrūz who continued to champion the cause of al-Musta‘īn in Syria, and flaunt his unwillingness to recognize Shaykh’s sultanate. Thus the move may have been a way for Shaykh to demonstrate his own power to suppress the office-holder associated with the sultanate and caliphate and appoint two others (including Shaykh himself) to take his place. See: al-Ḥājjī, *Anmāt*, 25-6.

⁹⁴² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:273-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63.

⁹⁴³ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:92-3.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:519; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:482; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:421.

⁹⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:282; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:15. In Rajab 818/September 1415, Shaykh, joined by al-Mu‘taḍid II, returned to Syria to subdue rebels including the *nā’ib* Qanbāy. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:327; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:34-6; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:437; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:290-1; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:22-3.

the next year.⁹⁴⁶ In Syria at the same time, Nawūz continued to strike his silver *Nawūzī* coins which defiantly named al-Mustaʿīn as sultan.⁹⁴⁷

In Dhū al-Ḥijja 819/January 1417 Mamluk authorities mounted and dispatched al-Mustaʿīn and his family to the Nile shore. Together with three surviving sons of Faraj, the caliph, his family, and members of Barqūq's family were exiled to the port of Alexandria under escort on the festival day of *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, 10 Dhū al-Ḥijja/29 January.⁹⁴⁸

Al-Mustaʿīn remained in Alexandria for the duration of Shaykh's sultanate until 824/1421. The caliph spent time incarcerated in various locations around the port and may have initially gone without a stipend. The amir Ṭaṭar quickly deposed Shaykh's son and successor al-Muẓaffar Aḥmad, and as sultan, pardoned al-Mustaʿīn on 26 Dhū al-Qaʿda 824/22 November 1421 and offered him the option of returning to Cairo.⁹⁴⁹ Perhaps exhausted by his political follies, the caliph chose instead to live out the remainder of his life on the Mediterranean coast, enjoying a considerable salary drawn from levies on local merchants.⁹⁵⁰ Authorities in Alexandria granted al-Mustaʿīn permission to leave his residence frequently and the caliph occasionally rode down for Friday prayers on a gold-saddled stallion, a gift from al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar, along with embroidered clothes and fine fabrics.⁹⁵¹ Under the rule of al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825-41/1422-38), local authorities lodged al-Mustaʿīn at the hall of Alexandria's great fortress,⁹⁵² where he remained until he went the way of all flesh afflicted by bubonic plague; the caliph's suffering having elevated him to the status of "martyr" in the view of many Mamluk chroniclers, on 20

⁹⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:37; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 2:135. According to al-Maqrīzī, authorities dispatched the caliph on 10 Dhū al-Ḥijja 819/29 January 1417. See: *Sulūk*, 4:1:373-4.

⁹⁴⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:287-8; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 2:519; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:273. On the Nawrūzī coins, see: Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 2:55-6; Ilisch, "Beiträge zur mamlukischen Numismatik V," 40.

⁹⁴⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:373; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:787; idem, *Durar al-ʿuqūd*, 2:215; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:85; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257; al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʾ*, 4:19-20; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:425, 511; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:316-7; Piloti, *L'Egypte*, 14; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:217. See also: Holt, "al-Mustaʿīn (II) billāh."

⁹⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:587; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63; al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʾ*, 4:20; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:425; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99.

⁹⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī wrote that each day the caliph received 100 dirhams from Cairo's funds (*naqd al-Qāhira*). See: *Sulūk*, 4:2:587; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:446; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99. Other sources mention that the exiled caliph received 800 dirhams a day for the rest of his life as salary. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʾ*, 4:20; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99.

⁹⁵¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63; al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʾ*, 4:20; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 406; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99.

⁹⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207-8; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257, 2:135; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:12. Ibn Ḥajar reports that under Barsbāy, al-Mustaʿīn may have been transferred to Damietta because it was simpler to keep him there, but the caliph refused and sought permission to remain in Alexandria where he remained free to move between various properties set aside for his use. See: *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, 3:273.

Jumādā II 833/16 March 1430 at about forty years of age.⁹⁵³ Throughout his thirteen years of exile in Alexandria, al-Musta‘īn considered himself caliph on grounds that he had never been legally deposed and that his deposition had been unlawful.⁹⁵⁴ He had even designated his son Yaḥyā (d. 847/1443) successor before leaving Cairo. When his uncle Dāwūd al-Mu‘taḍid II died on 4 Rabī‘ I 845/23 July 1441, Yaḥyā, then a man of almost 40 years, rode to Cairo in search of his birthright, but the ‘*ahd*’ of his father failed to impress Mamluk authorities in the court of the sultan Jaqmaq.⁹⁵⁵

* * *

At first glance, the sultanate-caliphate of al-Musta‘īn appears (and was celebrated by some contemporaries) as a brief restoration of temporal power to the caliphate. It quickly became clear, however, that the caliph was merely a compromise candidate that fronted the rivalry underlying the uneasy duumvirate of Shaykh and Nawrūz. In the post-Qalawunid age and with no acceptable sons of Barqūq or Faraj, al-Musta‘īn served as an attractive figurehead capable of inspiring loyalty to Islam among all classes in the Mamluk realm. Even though Shaykh emerged as the ultimate victor, the situation complicated his path to the sultanate.

The fact remains that without an army of his own in the faction-dominated political world of the Mamluks, the caliph stood slim chance of securing long-term power. Nevertheless, Abbasid prestige was not to be taken lightly: its formidable authority could still challenge a popular sultan, erode his support, and sway public opinion against him. Some chroniclers assert that without the opposition fronted by al-Musta‘īn, the desertion of Faraj by his adherents was unthinkable.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:844; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:215; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:446; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:207-8, 15:163; idem, *Manhal*, 7:63; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257, 2:135; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:274; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 4:20; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:567; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:511; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:90; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:217. Ibn Iyās lists his death date as 21 Jumādā II 833/17 March 1430 (*Badā’i’*, 2:12). Mamluk sources identify 833/1429-30 as an exceptionally bad year for the plague. See: *Nujūm*, 15:156; *Nayl al-amal*, 4:267-8; Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 189. Several years earlier in 820/1417 Cairo received a report of the deaths of various exiled notables in Alexandria (including some sons of Faraj) which wrongly counted the caliph al-Musta‘īn among the casualties. See: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:139.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:208; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:12.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:446, 9:218-9; al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:215; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:208; idem, *Manhal*, 7:63; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:257, 2:135; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:274, 5:172; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:205, 10:229; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:645; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 85; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:593; al-Suyūṭī, *Raf’ al-bās*, 127; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:237-8. Although he spent most of his life in Alexandria, Yaḥyā later settled in Cairo. His caliphal claim no doubt queering relations with the Abbasid family already in Cairo, Yaḥyā lived in isolation near Yellow Lane (*al-Darb al-Aṣfar*), a small alley adjoining the Baybarsiyya *madrasa* and *khānqā* complex to the central thoroughfare Bayn al-Qaṣrayn. Several Mamluk sources mention him honorably among the notables who died in Muḥarram 847/May 1443.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:193; Garcin, “Histoire,” 62.

In regard to authority, Mamluk sources imply a sense of independence for al-Mustaʿīn as he busied himself with appointments and depositions, none of which seemed to threaten the greater interests of Shaykh. If Shaykh was not quietly organizing his looming administration behind the scenes, al-Mustaʿīn's decisions were in large part guided by the fear that Faraj would return to power and exact his revenge on all who had helped depose him. To those ends, al-Mustaʿīn shared the same vision as Shaykh, which involved clearing the political field of amirs and other personnel awaiting the return of Faraj.

Administrators and *'ulamā'* directly involved in the affair of al-Mustaʿīn may have seen some of the writing on the wall. Faṭḥ Allāh was eager to curry favor with Shaykh whom he identified as a driving force. Ibn Mubārakshāh likewise sought a better position, but perhaps succumbed to last minute fraternal loyalty to the caliph especially after Shaykh made no secret of his eventual plans; but by that point, as the caliph's secretary, the fate of Ibn Mubārakshāh was already tied to that of al-Mustaʿīn.

Decades later, Mamluk sources re-told the story of al-Mustaʿīn as a tragedy. Sympathetic historians presented him as an esteemed public figure and, after cataloging his virtues -- piety, modesty, generosity, and humility -- conclude that he was playing against a stacked deck, a victim of the same political situation that he himself had helped bring about.⁹⁵⁷ Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī shared the view that the caliph had been a tragic figure who stood little chance of survival, but that he somehow should have known better, as his father had.⁹⁵⁸

Still it may be premature to dismiss the caliphate-sultanate as a doomed exercise from the outset. It seemed to have gained momentum until it was curtailed by Shaykh's emergence as the more powerful commander. It certainly had a great deal of potential considering the caliph's prestige, universal claim on loyalty, and apparently unhampered ability to appoint whomever he wished to office. The real test would have been whether the caliph-sultan could succeed in protecting the interests of multiple competing groups. In hindsight, things may have begun to go wrong for al-Mustaʿīn when he allocated broad powers to Nawrūz in Syria and Shaykh in Egypt. Shaykh quickly exploited his power and used it to attract many key state officials. We might only wonder that if the caliph-sultan had better capitalized on the hearty welcome he received from Cairene amirs and attached various parties loyal to Faraj to his own charisma, might he have survived the schemes of Shaykh and captured control of the sultanate in a more enduring or

⁹⁵⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 4:20.

⁹⁵⁸ According to al-Maqrīzī, "Neither the fates nor the days were on his side." See: *Sulūk*, 4:2:844; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:64.

tangible way?⁹⁵⁹ Naturally this can only remain in the realm of speculation, given the nature of al-Musta‘īn’s lack of access to the resources of real power.

An Ideal Caliph: The Reign of al-Mu‘taḍid billāh II (816-45/1414-41)

The Sultanate of al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh

With al-Musta‘īn in confinement until his exile in 819/1417, al-Mu‘taḍid II served as acting Abbasid caliph and joined al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh on his first offensive against Nawrūz on 9 Muḥarram 817/31 March 1414.⁹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the legacy of al-Musta‘īn haunted Shaykh’s sultanate with its political clout as late as Ramaḍān 817/November 1414 as *Nawrūzī* dinars naming the former caliph-sultan continued to appear in Syria.⁹⁶¹ A final showdown with Nawrūz ended the threat in Syria in 817/1414 and domestic affairs began to stabilize for Shaykh.⁹⁶² To protect his own position as sultan, Shaykh brought al-Mu‘taḍid II along for the journey, putting him beyond the reach of would-be conspirators. The sultan continued to use the Abbasid caliphate and the chief qadis as sources of legitimacy in his domestic policy when in Rajab 818/September 1415 he headed to Syria to fight the former *nā’ib* Qānībāy and his supporters who challenged the sultan’s appointment of Ṭaṭar as the new governor.⁹⁶³

Shaykh next turned his attention to the re-establishment of Mamluk authority in eastern Anatolia to counter the external threat posed by Temūr’s successor Shāhrukh (807-50/1405-75) and the Turkmen principalities restored by his father after the defeat of the Ottomans at Ankara in 804/1402.⁹⁶⁴ Chief among them was the growing power of the Qara Qoyunlu under Qara Yūsuf (792-823/1390-1420) in Baghdad.⁹⁶⁵ In the north, several independent Turkmen principalities provided a buffer zone between the Mamluk and Ottoman spheres of influence, some of whom were Mamluk clients such as the Ramadanids (Ramaḍān-oghulları) who dominated Cilicia from Adana, while their eastern neighbors, the Dulqadirids of Elbistan, held influence in Mar‘ash and Malatya. Stronger powers existed in the west, the Qaramanids (Qaramān-oghulları), as well as the

⁹⁵⁹ Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr*, 96.

⁹⁶⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma‘āthir*, 2:211; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:282; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:35; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:295-6; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:340; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 3:264.

⁹⁶¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:288.

⁹⁶² After being tricked into surrendering himself to Shaykh under disingenuous terms, Nawrūz was executed on 21 Rabī‘ II 817/10 July 1414. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:19-21 Restoring the order that had been in place under Barqūq became a major theme for the remainder of Shaykh’s reign. See: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 182-3; Garcin, “Circassian Mamlūks,” 291-3.

⁹⁶³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:35-6; idem, *Manhal*, 6:302-3, 397-8; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:437.

⁹⁶⁴ Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria,” 264-5. For Shāhrukh’s own claims to the caliphate in this period, see below.

⁹⁶⁵ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:21-2. Shaykh and his deputy in Aleppo supported the Aq Qoyunlu leader against the Qara Qoyunlu Turkmen. See: Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 46.

Turkmen confederations of the Aq Qoyunlu and Qara Qoyunlu further east.⁹⁶⁶ The Qaramanid Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad Beg seized Ṭarsūs from the Mamluk-allied Ramadanids which Shaykh later recovered.⁹⁶⁷ The Mamluk sultan grew increasingly troubled by the Qaramanids and the Qara Qoyunlu.⁹⁶⁸ Shaykh feared that strife between the two would spill into Aleppo, so he made the city his base of operations for staging expeditions into Anatolia.⁹⁶⁹ On 4 Ṣafar 820/23 March 1417 Shaykh headed to Damascus with al-Mu‘taḍid, the qadis, and representatives sent from the Qara Qoyunlu, Ottomans, and Ramadanids.⁹⁷⁰ The party continued to Aleppo in which Shaykh spent several weeks mending fences between the different march lords.

Over several months Shaykh checked the power of the Qaramanids and affirmed the subjugated status of the Ramadanids and Dulqadirids as vassals of Cairo. On 5 Shawwāl 820/15 November 1417, the sultan returned to Cairo in the royal robes and emblems of the sultanate to celebrate his success. Al-Mu‘taḍid, the qadis and amirs were all duly dressed in robes and given an important place in the sultan’s procession.⁹⁷¹ The caliph’s presence at negotiations and also in the victory march affirmed Shaykh’s supremacy before other Muslim rulers, his own amirs, and the subjects residing in Mamluk territory.

Qara Yūsuf and his confederation remained a threat for Shaykh, particularly in the Aleppan theater. On 26 Sha‘bān 821/28 September 1418 Shaykh summoned the caliph and the ‘ulamā’ to publicly declare Qara Yūsuf an infidel for his transgressions against Sunni orthodoxy.⁹⁷² The *shaykh al-islām* Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī composed a document enumerating the Qara Qoyunlu chief’s infractions against *sharī‘a* and the qadis wrote an approval for his death to which al-Mu‘taḍid and others lent their signatures. It was thus that the caliph and other ‘ulamā’ facilitated the excommunication of the sultan’s enemies and made the shedding of their blood permissible at a time when the great majority of them included fellow Muslims. When tensions

⁹⁶⁶ P. M. Holt, “Al-Mu‘ayyad *Shaykh*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 7:271-2. For a study of diplomatic relations between the Mamluks and their eastern competitors the Timurids, the Qara Qoyunlu, and the Qaramanids, see: Malika Dekkiche, “Le Caire carrefour des ambassades: Étude historique et diplomatique de la correspondance échangée entre les sultans mamlouks circassiens et les souverains timourides et turcomans (Qara Qoyunlu - Qaramanides) au XVes. d’après le ms. ar. 4440 (BnF, Paris)” (PhD diss., Université de Liège, 2011).

⁹⁶⁷ Holt, “al-Mu‘ayyad *Shaykh*”; idem, *Age of the Crusades*, 83.

⁹⁶⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:47-56.

⁹⁶⁹ Holt, “al-Mu‘ayyad *Shaykh*.”

⁹⁷⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:384-5; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:126-8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:46.

⁹⁷¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:422; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:60. According to Ibn Iyās he returned in Ramaḍān 820/October 1417 with the caliph and qadis in tow. See: *Badā’i*, 2:33.

⁹⁷² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:459-60; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:171-2; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:68, 99-100; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:22; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 2:39-40. See also Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 360.

began to escalate, Qara Yūsuf ultimately withdrew, claiming that revenge against the Aq Qoyunlu leader Qara Yülük had been his true interest in the region.⁹⁷³

Qara Yülük sent word to Cairo on 27 Rajab 823/7 August 1420 that he had captured and beheaded Pīr ‘Umar, Qara Yūsuf’s proxy in Arzankān. Shortly before his own death Shaykh prepared an expedition against Qara Yūsuf and on 4 Sha‘bān/14 August proclaimed the lawfulness of fighting Qara Yūsuf and in the caliph’s presence, summoned men to take up arms against him.⁹⁷⁴

Al-Mu‘taḍid II also joined other members of the religious establishment in attempts to curb plague outbreaks that menaced Shaykh’s time in power. By Rabī‘ II 822/April-May 1419 the epidemic had again grown widespread in Cairo, claiming nearly half the fellahin population.⁹⁷⁵ The sultan took the threat seriously and saw faith as the most effective way to combat it. To these ends Shaykh ordered three days of public fasting which culminated in a ceremony on the desert plain on 15 Rabī‘ II/11 May.⁹⁷⁶ Shaykh himself beseeched God to end the plague and encouraged the caliph, positioned at his right side, as well as other scholars, jurists, and Sufis on his left, to lend their efforts. Pious people including the caliph, dressed in white cloaks, held caliphal standards overhead. Likewise clad in white, Shaykh led a somber ceremony at Barqūq’s tomb bereft of the usual customary sultanic pomp and heavily focused on Quranic recitations in modest surroundings.⁹⁷⁷ On foot, Shaykh led Friday prayers flanked on both sides by al-Mu‘taḍid, the qadis, and other scholars. Ibn Taghrībirdī declared the event a success when the severity of the plague decreased shortly thereafter.⁹⁷⁸

Al-Mu‘taḍid II and al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar

As the health of the sultan declined and Shaykh neared death, he summoned the caliph and other religious dignitaries on 20 Shawwāl 823/28 October 1420 in order to name his infant son Aḥmad to the sultanate after him.⁹⁷⁹ In a matter of months, Shaykh’s former deputy, the amir Ṭaṭar, a former mamlūk of Barqūq, emerged as the most powerful strongman and before long,

⁹⁷³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 4:68; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:22.

⁹⁷⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:535; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:222; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:99-100.

⁹⁷⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:488; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:77-8; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:34; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:45.

⁹⁷⁶ Shaykh similarly ordered three days of fasting and prayers for rain in Jumādā II 823/June 1420. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:460.

⁹⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:487; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:198-99; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:78-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:37; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:46.

⁹⁷⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:549-50; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:80; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:46.

⁹⁷⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:587; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:227; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:103; idem, *Manhal*, 6:308-9; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:521; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:70-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:57.

aided by his *Ẓāhiriyya* comrades, triumphed over the younger supporters of the sultan's regime. Ṭaṭar became regent to Shaykh's son after the father's death on 9 Muḥarram 824/14 January 1421.⁹⁸⁰ The amirs summoned al-Mu'taḍid II to establish the child as sultan. Aḥmad received *bay'a* as al-Malik al-Muẓaffar in the presence of the caliph and the qadis, though he cried inconsolably throughout the entire ceremony. The caliph then led funerary prayers for Shaykh.⁹⁸¹

With the looming threat of malcontent Syrian amirs, Ṭaṭar was anxious to receive formal authority as *amīr kabīr*.⁹⁸² He summoned al-Mu'taḍid to the Ashrafiyya barracks of the citadel on 10 Ṣafar 824/14 February 1421 to testify before a gathering of amirs and religious notables that he had entrusted Ṭaṭar with the affairs of the subjects and granted him power to depose and appoint at will, although al-Muẓaffar Aḥmad would retain the title of sultan, along with recognition in the Friday sermon and coinage prerogatives. The qadis then validated and ratified the caliph's testament.⁹⁸³

On 14 Rabī' II 824/18 April 1421 Ṭaṭar advanced on Syria to confront the opposition. He camped at Raydāniyya, joined by al-Mu'taḍid II, the sultan, amirs, and important government officials before heading to Damascus a week later.⁹⁸⁴ After he secured Syria, Ṭaṭar moved to usurp the sultanate while in Damascus on 29 Sha'bān 824/29 August.⁹⁸⁵ The caliph and qadis swore allegiance to Ṭaṭar followed by the amirs and mamlūks.⁹⁸⁶ During the ceremony al-Mu'taḍid questioned the attendees on Ṭaṭar's installation, whereupon the assembly unanimously voiced satisfaction with the *amīr kabīr* and kissed the ground after his confirmation. Ṭaṭar donned the traditional black caliphal cloak and was prayed for as sultan the same day on the pulpits of Damascus.⁹⁸⁷

Ṭaṭar's supporters viewed his 26 Dhū al-Qa'da 824/22 November 1421 order to release al-Musta'in from Alexandria along with the sending of gifts sent to the former caliph-sultan

⁹⁸⁰ Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:237; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:107-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:75-7; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:465 (8 Muḥarram 824/13 January 1421).

⁹⁸¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:563-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:167; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:521; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:465; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 407; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:63-4.

⁹⁸² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:180-1; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:63-4.

⁹⁸³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:569, 572; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:240-41; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:176.

⁹⁸⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:576; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:243-45; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:186; idem, *Manhal*, 6:399; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:503-4; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:88; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:522; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:466; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:67 (19 Rabī' II 824/23 April 1421).

⁹⁸⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:582; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:246-47; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:186, 198; idem, *Manhal*, 6:402; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:509; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:94-5; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:466; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:70-1.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:198; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:509; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:94-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 407; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:466; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:70-1. For Ṭaṭar's investiture deed, see: Abū Bakr ibn Ḥijja, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshā'*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Beirut, 2005), 336-43.

⁹⁸⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:198; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:509.

favorably. The gesture increased the sultan's prestige, esteem, and commitment to a universal symbol.⁹⁸⁸ Ṭaṭar's official pardon of the exiled caliph may have represented a reversal of Shaykh's unfavorable policy. With al-Mu'taḍid established in the caliphate, Ṭaṭar had little to lose by freeing al-Musta'īn as a public act of goodwill.

Illness shortened the reign of Ṭaṭar, though before his death he ordered al-Mu'taḍid II, the qadis, and important heads of state to attend him in the citadel to receive his final instructions. Just as Barqūq and Shaykh had hoped to secure their dynasties, on 2 Dhū al-Ḥijja 824/28 November 1421 Ṭaṭar requested al-Mu'taḍid II to oversee the investiture of his own son Muḥammad as successor.⁹⁸⁹ The boy was summoned to the sultan's palace and seated personally by the caliph who swore allegiance to him as sultan al-Malik al-Sāliḥ.⁹⁹⁰ Draped in black caliphal robes and adorned with royal symbols (*shi'ār*), al-Sāliḥ Muḥammad mounted the decorated horse and began a procession. The masquerade lasted four months until Ṭaṭar's amirs completed the Circassian succession pattern. Barsbāy and Jānībak al-Ṣūfī emerged as the two leading contenders, the former ultimately embarking on the path to power as regent to the young sultan.⁹⁹¹

Al-Mu'taḍid II and Al-Ashraf Barsbāy

On 16 Dhū al-Ḥijja 824/12 December 1421 al-Mu'taḍid II invested Barsbāy as *niẓām al-mulk* with administrative control over government affairs, acting as regent for al-Sāliḥ Muḥammad until he reached puberty.⁹⁹² In accordance with Mamluk custom, al-Mu'taḍid featured prominently in the enthronement ceremony on 8 Rabī' II 825/1 April 1422, after Barsbāy seized the sultanate for himself. At the event, the amirs kissed the ground before Barsbāy and the caliph invested him with a robe.⁹⁹³

Mamluk sources mention little regarding al-Mu'taḍid's involvement at the court of al-Ashraf Barsbāy (825-41/1422-38), reinforcing the idea that the caliph's political role was

⁹⁸⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:587; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:446; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:205-6; idem, *Manhal*, 6:403, 7:63; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99-101; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 4:20; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:74 (Dhū al-Ḥijja 824/December 1421).

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid. See also: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:250, 254; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:516.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:211; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:516; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:101; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:76.

⁹⁹¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:205-6; idem, *Manhal*, 3:258-62; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:74.

⁹⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:593; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:221; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:101.

⁹⁹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:607-9; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:269-70; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 3:261-2; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 3:5-6; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:109; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:79. Ibn Taghrībirdī claims Barsbāy promptly discontinued this "sacrilegious practice" (which the historian attributed to the days of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz) and opted instead to have the amirs kiss his hand. See: *Nujūm*, 14:242, 247. For the investiture document issued in the name of the caliph to Barsbāy, see: Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 368-74.

negligible and that he remained a primarily religious figure with minimal responsibility.⁹⁹⁴ Although Holt described it as an “indian summer of power and authority” for the Mamluk sultanate, the early reign of Barsbāy was consumed by rivalry with Jānīb al-Şūfī, a considerable challenger for the sultanate who had escaped detention.⁹⁹⁵ Assiduous paranoia related to the whereabouts and activities of the fugitive amir often drove Barsbāy to act erratically, and his reign became known for its excessive purges.⁹⁹⁶

The Timurids, the Caliphate, and the Hijāz

Temür’s death initiated a succession struggle resulting in the eventual victory of his youngest son Shāhrukh. A pious ruler by reputation, he pointedly abandoned the Mongol customs of his father, moving instead towards embracing and applying the Islamic *sharī‘a*.⁹⁹⁷ Shāhrukh, himself, as overlord of other Muslim rulers, presented himself at least for a time, as an occupant of the caliphal office⁹⁹⁸ -- a claim Mamluk sultans hesitated to make for themselves.⁹⁹⁹ This conclusion is based in part on the earlier work of Sir Thomas Arnold, as well as hitherto unexamined numismatic evidence compiled by John E. Woods establishing that Shāhrukh claimed for himself the caliphate between 807-821/1405-18, for a brief period before his silver coinage reform of 828/1425-6.¹⁰⁰⁰ After his early western campaigns (which also brought him

⁹⁹⁴ However, other descendants of the Prophet were summoned to the court of Barsbāy and asked to pray for the alleviation of the plague. Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:436-37; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:343.

⁹⁹⁵ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 184. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:253-4; Ahmad Darraj, *L’Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay, 825-841/1422-1438* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1961), 23-8.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:353-4.

⁹⁹⁷ Maria E. Subtelny, “The Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh and its Promoters: A Study of the Connection between Ideology and Higher Learning in Timurid Iran,” in *Proceedings of the 27th Meeting of Haneda Memorial Hall: Symposium on Central Asia and Iran, August 30, 1993* (Kyoto: Institute of Inner Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1994), 15-6.

⁹⁹⁸ Arnold, *Caliphate*, 114-5.

⁹⁹⁹ There are some instances of the “*amīr al-mu’minīn*” title being associated with the later Ayyubid and early Mamluk sultans. In the popular *sīra* literature of Baybars, the Mamluk sultan is referred to as Commander of the Faithful. See: Jean Claude Garcin, “Récit d’une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars” in *L’Orient au cœur en l’honneur d’André Miquel*, ed. F. Sanagustin (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001), 252-3. Qānşūh al-Ghawrī likewise made use of caliphal epithets in court, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰⁰ I am grateful to John Woods for allowing me to read his unpublished paper, “Shahrukh’s Caliphate,” which will eventually be published as part of a chapter on titles in his upcoming book, *The Timurid Aristocratic Order*. According to Woods, a number of the coins minted in Shāhrukh’s territory bear the phrase “may God perpetuate his rule and his caliphate (*khilāfa*)” which was not found on his later coins. See: “Shahrukh’s Caliphate,” 1; Linda Komaroff, “The Epigraphy of Timurid Coinage: Some Preliminary Remarks,” *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 31 (1986): 217-9; Maria E. Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, no. 2 (1995): 210-36.

into contact with the Mamluks and *their* 150 year-old hosting of the Abbasid caliphate), it seems the Timurid ruler abandoned or lost interest in the title.¹⁰⁰¹

Pīr Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar Shaykh (d. 809/1407), Temūr’s grandson, was ready to make a wider break with Mongol tradition. Examining the narratives of Timurid chroniclers such as Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, a number of modern historians have pointed out that in the course of his rebellion against his uncle Shāhrukh in 1405, some of his advisors briefly recommended that the young ruler of Fars request an investiture deed from the Abbasid caliph of Cairo himself!¹⁰⁰²

Although the Mamluk sultans had enjoyed regional dominance since the reign of Barqūq, Barsbāy found himself up against other powerful Sunni rivals, including Shāhrukh and his Aq Qoyunlu vassal Qara Yülük.¹⁰⁰³ Concerns over the ambitions of his rivals likely drove Barsbāy to reassert Mamluk hegemony over the Ḥijāz and its Red Sea trade.¹⁰⁰⁴ Since the time of Baybars, Mamluk sultans had largely abandoned administration of the Ḥijāz to local tribal overlords in Mecca and Medina. Barsbāy, however, revived the notion, dating from the Ayyubids, that authority over the two Holy Cities was the right of the sovereign of Cairo. This he emphasized symbolically by exercising the exclusive prerogative of sending the *kiswa* cloth covering for the Ka‘ba at each major pilgrimage.¹⁰⁰⁵

Anxious to affirm a counterclaim to Islam’s holiest of holies, Shāhrukh regularly offered to send *kiswa* drapes for the Ka‘ba.¹⁰⁰⁶ Barsbāy was most likely worried that Shāhrukh might disturb his commercial interests by gaining a foothold in the Ḥijāz. The Timurid ruler renewed his *kiswa* campaign in 838/1434-5 but Barsbāy found a religious loophole by which to deny him.¹⁰⁰⁷ Thus, protection of the Ḥijāz, rather than support of the caliph appeared to gain traction in Mamluk ideological claims to preeminence in the broader Islamic world of the early fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the caliphate continued to be maintained as a hallmark of the Mamluk regime.¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰¹ Woods, “Shahrukh’s Caliphate,” 8-9; Dekkiche, “Le Caire carrefour des ambassades,” 81-2. See also: Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 128.

¹⁰⁰² Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 378; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 105-6; Beatrice F. Manz, “Temūr and the Problem of a Conqueror’s Legacy,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Third Series) 8, no. 1 (1998): 34-5; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 199.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:199-203.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Darraj, *L’Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay*, 159-237.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 381-5.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:342; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:368.

¹⁰⁰⁷ In his evaluation of Barsbāy’s reign, Ibn Taghrībirdī states that no deed of the sultan was more praiseworthy than his denial of Shāhrukh. See: *Nujūm*, 14:368.

¹⁰⁰⁸ For a recent re-assessment of the Mamluk-Timurid contest over Ḥijāz supremacy, see the work of Malika Dekkiche: “New Source, New Debate: Reevaluation of the Mamluk-Timurid Struggle for Religious

Mamluk authorities of the time, no doubt wishing to broadcast their superiority abroad, sent robes of honor in the name of the caliph to the Qara Qoyunlu ruler of Iraq and Azerbaijan, Jahānshāh (837-53/1434-49 as a Timurid vassal), as well as to the conqueror of Constantinople, the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II (855-86/1451-81). Mamluk emissaries from the caliph were greeted by hostility and insult at both courts. Jahānshāh warned the emissary that if not for his status as a visiting messenger, he would have lost his tongue. The Qara Qoyunlu ruler demanded the emissary to don the caliphal robe and gave him 300 dinars for having made the journey. Mehmed II ordered his robe to be shredded and informed the emissary that *he* was the caliph of the world.¹⁰⁰⁹

Edessa and Āmid (Diyār Bakr)

Barsbāy continued earlier efforts made by al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh to secure Mamluk interests in the marcher principalities north of Syria in southwest Anatolia. In the context of an Aq Qoyunlu border dispute, the sultan headed to Syria on 19 Rajab 836/11 March 1433, joined by the qadis and al-Mu'taḍid II donning a turban wrapped in the style of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.¹⁰¹⁰ The caliph was an important focal point in Barsbāy's procession, the qadis walked before him with the caliphal standard paraded over their heads.¹⁰¹¹ After several weeks of travel through Syria, Barsbāy left the qadis in Aleppo and continued on with al-Mu'taḍid II; the caliph personally escorted by the second class amir Qara Sunqur.¹⁰¹² The company entered Edessa after crossing the Euphrates and found it leveled by the Mamluk army after having committed heinous

Supremacy in the Hijaz (Paris, BnF ms. ar. 4440),” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014) [in press]; idem, “Diplomacy at its Zenith: Agreement between the Mamluks and the Timurids for the Sending of the Kiswah,” in *Egypt and Syria under Mamluk Rule: Political, Social and Cultural Aspects*, ed. Amalia Levanoni [in press].

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, *Nafā'is al-majālis al-sulṭāniyya*, published in *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī: ṣafahāt min ta'rīkh Miṣr fī qarn al-'āshir hijrī*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (Cairo 1941), 101-2; Robert Irwin, “The Political Thinking of the “Virtuous Ruler,”” *Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī*,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 46-7.

¹⁰¹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:891; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 3:492-500; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:8-9; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 3:259; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:326-7; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:579; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:524; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:146. See also: Darraj, *L'Égypte sous le règne de Barsbay*, 373-81; Woods, *Aqqyunlu*, 50-4. For further mention on the “Baghdad style” for caliphal turbans, see: *Badā'i'*, 5:41. Mayer describes the caliph's turban as follows: “The caliph's headgear consisted of a fine round turban with a trailing end piece (*raḥraf*) at the back, about two feet long and one foot wide, reaching from the top to the bottom of the turban. [...] [At the time of investiture the caliph might receive] a black head shawl (*tarḥa*).” See: *Mamluk Costume*, 13; Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 117; Fuess, “Sultans with Horns,” 75.

¹⁰¹¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:146. See also: Patrick Wing, “Submission, Defiance, and the Rules of Politics on the Mamluk Sultanate's Anatolian Frontier,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (Third Series) (2015 – in press): 8.

¹⁰¹² Ibn Taghrībirdī reports that the Mamluks had made it a long standing practice for the Abbasid caliph to be accompanied by an amir over lengthy journeys.

outrages against the local population.¹⁰¹³ Barsbāy withdrew and camped near the Turkmen capital of Āmid (Diyār Bakr) on 8 Shawwāl 836/28 May 1433. Al-Mu‘taḍid II rode alongside the sultan before lines of troops surrounded by unarmed government administrators.¹⁰¹⁴ Wishing to demonstrate an air of religious supremacy, Barsbāy ordered his officials to dress in the cloaks of jurists and marched them before the army. Residents in Āmid were apparently awestruck by the massive formation. When the army reached the city, Qara Yülük, hoping to ambush the Mamluks in a flashflood, unleashed the dammed waters of the Tigris. Barsbāy’s campaign came to naught and the Mamluk sultan, unable to seize the Aq Qoyunlu stronghold, returned in shame to Cairo in early 837/1433.¹⁰¹⁵ Nevertheless with the caliph and qadis riding before him, he received a hero’s welcome in Cairo, the city having been decorated in his honor.¹⁰¹⁶

Death of Barsbāy

At the end of 841/1438, the dying sultan summoned al-Mu‘taḍid II, the qadis, and amirs to witness the delegation of his son Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf as successor. In his final hours Barsbāy sat in a serene pavilion, encircled by the caliph and other notables of his regime. When prompted, al-Mu‘taḍid, who formally received supervision (*imḍā’*) over the affair, approved the decision and praised Barsbāy for his wise selection. The qadi and deputy secretary (*nā’ib kātīb al-sirr*) Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Bakr testified to the selection of Yūsuf and the caliph validated the statement as the qadis served as notaries.¹⁰¹⁷ The amir Jaqmaq eventually became Yūsuf’s regent and prepared to seize the government in his own name.¹⁰¹⁸ The caliph duly robed Jaqmaq in Dhū al-Qa‘da 841/April-May 1438 as *atābak* and recognized his authority as *niẓām al-mulk* over matters of importance.¹⁰¹⁹ Al-Mu‘taḍid later met with Jaqmaq and the religious and military elites to invest Yūsuf as al-Malik al-‘Azīz. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī led funeral prayers for Barsbāy, after members of the religious establishment observed that the double-satin robe, made objectionable by the *sharī‘a* and bestowed on the caliph by Yūsuf, had negated the Commander of the Faithful’s permissibility to lead prayers.¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:12.

¹⁰¹⁴ Al-Suyūṭī wrote that the caliph rode before the sultan. See: *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 327.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:13-35; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:151.

¹⁰¹⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:510; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:151 (20 Muḥarram 837/6 September 1433).

¹⁰¹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:1044-5; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:73-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:102-3; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 3:415-7; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:39; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:608; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:554.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:103; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:39-40; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 407.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:73-4, 79; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 3:415-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:188.

¹⁰²⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:1053; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:79; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:106-7.

The caliph invested and robed Yūsuf in black as sultan on 13 Dhū al-Ḥijja 841/7 June 1438.¹⁰²¹ The next day at a ceremony in the castle, al-Mu‘taḍid received the gift of al-Ṣābūnī Island in addition to other landholdings possessed by the Abbasid family and a few other *iqṭā’* disbursements.¹⁰²² Tensions mounted as the army split between supporters of Jaqmaq as *amīr kabīr* and the Ashrafi mamlūks of Barsbāy cloistered in the citadel, who while less-experienced, had the advantage of access to the treasury, the armory, and the Abbasid caliph.¹⁰²³ Although he had failed to protect the sons of Shaykh and Ṭaṭar from being swept away by ambitious amirs, al-Mu‘taḍid expressed his intention to uphold the oath sworn to Barsbāy and supported the young sultan against Jaqmaq as the latter prepared to seize power.¹⁰²⁴

Al-Mu‘taḍid II and al-Zāhir Jaqmaq

When the amirs agreed on the succession of Jaqmaq (842-57/1438-53), al-Mu‘taḍid II arrived at the Ḥarrāqa pavilion near the sultan’s stables according to custom.¹⁰²⁵ Jaqmaq did not appear to begrudge the caliph’s opposition and loyalty to al-‘Azīz Yūsuf. On 17 Rabī‘ I 842/7 September 1438 the amir Qarqamās al-Sha‘bānī called the attention of al-Mu‘taḍid and the qadis to the sultan’s youth and argued that Jaqmaq was better suited to safeguard the welfare of the Muslims. After the assembly attested to a transfer of power to Jaqmaq, it fell to the Abbasid caliph, who after praying to God for the best outcome for the state, initiated the *bay’a* followed by the qadis and amirs.¹⁰²⁶ To demonstrate his acknowledgment of the unsuitability of al-‘Azīz Yūsuf, al-Mu‘taḍid proclaimed before the amirs, “I am aware of this, and I testify to you that I have removed al-Malik al-‘Azīz from the sultanate and have rendered the *amīr kabīr* Jaqmaq sultan [in his place].” Jaqmaq produced a black caliphal robe, suspended a sword from his shoulder, and mounted a horse with the emblems of sultanate and the insignia of sovereignty. As sultan, al-Zāhir Jaqmaq, shaded by a regal parasol, followed a procession of his amirs.¹⁰²⁷ In turn

¹⁰²¹ Ibid. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:222; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:554; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:191.

¹⁰²² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:227; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:40; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:192. On al-Ṣābūnī Island, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:590.

¹⁰²³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:235.

¹⁰²⁴ On the ineffectuality of the caliph as a guarantor in the Burjī period, see: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 189; Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 18.

¹⁰²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:3:1086; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:256; idem, *Manhal*, 4:283-4. In Ṣafar 842/August 1438 the caliph had also been an important symbol for the Ashrafiyya supporters of Yūsuf during the rivalry with supporters of Jaqmaq (*Sulūk*, 4:3:1073-4; *Nujūm*, 15:233-9).

¹⁰²⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:3:1086-7; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:94 (19 Rabī‘ I 842/9 September 1438); al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:19; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:53 (19 Rabī‘ I); al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:615; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:562; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:197.

¹⁰²⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:94; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:256; idem, *Manhal*, 4:283-4.

Jaqlmaq invested al-Mu'taḍid with a robe and gave him a lavishly decorated horse.¹⁰²⁸ Inaugural festivities concluded with a public reading of Jaqlmaq's diploma in the citadel on 9 Rabī' II 842/29 September 1438 in the presence of al-Mu'taḍid, the qadis, and the *kātib al-sirr* Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn Naṣr Allāh who read it. Before the congregation dispersed, Jaqlmaq again presented the caliph and others with robes and horses.¹⁰²⁹

Some years into Jaqlmaq's reign, in Rabī' I 843/August 1439, the amir Baybars ibn Baqr,¹⁰³⁰ who had fallen afoul of the sultan and temporarily escaped his wrath, threw himself at the mercy and good graces of al-Mu'taḍid II whom he begged to mediate on his behalf. The caliph spoke kindly of the disgraced amir, and Jaqlmaq, after accepting the intercession of the Commander of the Faithful, granted Baybars ibn Baqr safe passage to leave his presence unharmed.¹⁰³¹ Some years after the death of al-Mu'taḍid II, however, the anger of the Mamluk sultan caught up with Baybars on 25 Jumādā II 849/28 September 1445, and he was imprisoned in the tower of the citadel. Presented with an enumeration of his crimes, the sultan canceled the previous caliphal pardon and demanded that Baybars be called to account for his past offenses.¹⁰³²

Man of Knowledge, Man of Religion

For nearly thirty years al-Mu'taḍid II participated in solemn ceremonies at the behest of new sultans, investing no fewer than seven.¹⁰³³ His somewhat mundane caliphate can be attributed to his isolation from politics. The caliph focused on a quiet life of religion and did no more than the ceremonial requirements expected of him. More importantly, no opportunities emerged which might have thrust him into power politics.¹⁰³⁴ Thus the caliph remained a religious and political cipher available to lend authority to public programs such as prayer against the plague or to officially castigate enemies of the regime as infidels in accordance with the wishes of the sultan and his circle.

Biographical dictionaries and caliphal histories stress the generosity and piety of the caliph and list his intellectual pursuits, including private studies and public engagement in

¹⁰²⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:261.

¹⁰²⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:3:1096-7; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:276; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:38; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:199.

¹⁰³⁰ Al-Ṣayrafī also identifies him as Baybars ibn Nu'ayr. See: *Nuzhat*, 4:154.

¹⁰³¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:3:1165; al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:154; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:97. I did not find any further biographical information regarding Baybars ibn Baqr [or ibn Nu'ayr].

¹⁰³² Al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:322.

¹⁰³³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:304; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:215; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144.

¹⁰³⁴ Garcin, "Histoire," 63.

scholarly salons.¹⁰³⁵ In spite of his own modest status as a scholar, al-Mu‘taḍid II, a skilled orator, was happy to address and advise students of religion and enjoyed explaining challenging concepts to members of court.¹⁰³⁶ The caliph actively patronized and sought the company of men of letters. Among his many admirers was Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, who received numerous gifts before al-Mu‘taḍid II departed for Āmid with Barsbāy, and dedicated florid verses of thanks and praise to him.¹⁰³⁷ Al-Qalqashandī dedicated an extensive work on the caliphate to him,¹⁰³⁸ while Ibn Taghrībirdī frequented the caliph’s household and closely studied his behavior as a youth.¹⁰³⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī knew the caliph personally and wrote that in all the time he had spent with al-Mu‘taḍid II, the caliph had always been an exemplary pillar of manners and good etiquette.¹⁰⁴⁰ Additionally, Ibn Taghrībirdī describes the caliph as a man committed to reciting daily devotions and verses from the Qur’ān at particular times (*lahu awrād fī kulli yawm*).¹⁰⁴¹ In the caliph, biographers recalled a man who strove to emulate the standards of the Rāshidūn caliphs and other notable rulers that preceded him.

Like his father al-Mutawakkil, al-Mu‘taḍid II participated in the funerary prayers of the Mamluk elite including amirs such as Yashbak al-Sāqī al-A‘raj, the *atābak* of Egypt in 831/1427-8,¹⁰⁴² as well as members of the ‘*ulamā*’ including the qadi and chancery chief Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārīzī.¹⁰⁴³ The caliph also led funeral prayers for Barsbāy’s *kātib al-sirr* Burhān al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī in 835/1431.¹⁰⁴⁴

The Mamluk chancery of the time relied on the name of al-Mu‘taḍid II in which it issued many surviving investiture documents and other deeds of appointment.¹⁰⁴⁵ Like his brother al-Musta‘īn, al-Mu‘taḍid lent himself to the duty of sanctifying investiture deeds requested by medieval Indian rulers such as the sultan of Bengal, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh (d. 836-

¹⁰³⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258; al-Suyūfī, *Husn*, 2:90; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 407; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:215; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 1:634; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 25; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:581; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:218.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:304; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258.

¹⁰³⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:215; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:581; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 26. See below, p. 361.

¹⁰³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 1:1-5, 3:375-81.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:305; idem, *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper as “Extracts from Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s Chronicle Entitled Ḥawādith ad-duhūr fī madā ‘l-ayyām wash-shuhūr,” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930-42), 137 (“I knew him for a long time.”); idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258.

¹⁰⁴² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:787; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:417; al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 3:140; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:151-2.

¹⁰⁴³ Al-Ṣayrafi, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 2:481. Schimmel has discussed the role of the caliph and qadis at the funerals of Mamluk dignitaries. See: “Kalif und Kadi,” 75.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 1:314-5; Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 208-9.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Al-Mu‘taḍid II is a fixture in the document collection attributed to Ibn Ḥijja, receiving mention in several documents studied in Chapter 5 of this work.

7/1433) which in turn helped maintain some semblance of Indian accountability if not loyalty to the Mamluk regime.¹⁰⁴⁶

Unlike his father, however, and in spite of his connections and close association with the Mamluk court, al-Mu‘taḍid II struggled with a difficult financial situation compounded by the strains of supporting a large household. The demands of his family and entourage combined with his philanthropic activities could not be maintained by his primary source of income -- an *iqṭā’* which yielded little more than 4,000 dinars per year.¹⁰⁴⁷ Even revenues from the Nafīsī shrine and al-Ṣābūnī Island seemed to be of little help, forcing the caliph to live a sparse lifestyle.¹⁰⁴⁸

The investiture of Jaqmaq proved to be the final major public act of al-Mu‘taḍid II. The caliph’s choice for succession was not known during much of his caliphate, although he had frequently left his only son Ibrāhīm, an accomplished memorizer of the Qur’ān and well-read student of the Shāfi‘ī rite, as his deputy whenever he traveled with Barsbāy. Nevertheless, Ibrāhīm, who did not live past 30, died of tuberculosis, predeceasing his father in Rabī‘ I 837/October-November 1433.¹⁰⁴⁹ As the caliph reached the end of a long sickness in his late sixties,¹⁰⁵⁰ he arranged for the caliphate to pass to his full brother Sulaymān, whom he praised as one who had “never committed a major sin in youth or in adulthood.”¹⁰⁵¹ Al-Mu‘taḍid II died on 4 Rabī‘ I 845/23 July 1441 and after a lavish state funeral at the Mu‘minī Muṣallā of sultan Ḥasan below the citadel (which even included the prayers of the pious Jaqmaq), the caliph was interred in the family fashion near the Nafīsī shrine.¹⁰⁵²

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:192-3. In 830/1427, Indian ambassadors instructed to invest money locally in *madrasas* and other building projects, came bearing gifts for Barsbāy and the caliph. A series of embassies were also exchanged between 832-6/1428-33 until the death of the sultan of Gujerat and the succession of his 14 year-old son al-Muzaḥḥar Aḥmad Shāh (836-40/1433-7). See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:756, 924-5. See also: Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate*, 46-7; al-Mashhadānī, *al-‘Alāqāt al-Miṣriyya-al-Hindiyya fī al-‘aṣr al-mamlūkī*, 51.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:304; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 137.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī commends al-Mu‘taḍid II for his handling of the family’s debts and attributes the caliph’s determination to get free of usury to his Islamic piety. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:304-5; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 137; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Raf‘ al-bās ‘an Banī al-‘Abbās* (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2011), 28-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:343; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:533.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:489; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 1; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:328. Ibn Ḥajar thought the caliph’s age at death was close to 90 (*Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:189), though al-Suyūṭī had it on the personal authority of the caliph’s niece that al-Mu‘taḍid II died aged 63. See: *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 407.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 4:189; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:53; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:259-61; al-Ṣayraṭī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:236, 241 (al-Mustakfi II became caliph on 9 Rabī‘ II 845/27 August 1441); al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:269; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 13, 359; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144, 329.

¹⁰⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:489; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:258-9; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:215; idem, *Ḍhayl al-tāmm*, 1:634; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:581; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 407; al-Ṣayraṭī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs*, 4:241; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:230; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:218.

A Life beyond Reproach: al-Mustakfī billāh II (r. 845-55/1441-51)

In the summer of 845/1441 at roughly 50 years of age, Sulaymān ibn al-Mutawakkil assumed the caliphate as al-Mustakfī billāh II shortly after the death of his elder brother.¹⁰⁵³ A magnificent procession followed his *bay'a* ceremony and the new caliph paraded home on a stately horse behind the qadis and notables. For the ten years of his caliphate, al-Mustakfī II, a skilled novice in the Shāfi'ī rite, remained aloof from the intrigues and politics of the sultan's court. As a result little has been preserved about him in the annals and most information comes from biographical dictionaries which above all seek to enumerate his praiseworthy qualities.¹⁰⁵⁴

A highly respected court figure with ties to the '*ulamā*', al-Mustakfī had been a notable participant in the funeral for Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī in 852/1448.¹⁰⁵⁵ The caliph was also responsible for securing an illustrious position for the father of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, Kamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr as an *imām* and distinguished himself as a great benefactor of the Suyūṭī family.¹⁰⁵⁶ Thus al-Suyūṭī's warm remembrance of growing up in the caliph's household and praise for the caliph's piety come as little surprise:

[Al-Mustakfī II] was among the most virtuous and devoted of the caliphs; pious, religious, and engaged in worship. He occupied himself with many acts of devotion, prayer and reading the Qur'ān. He held his tongue from idle talk and led an irreproachable life.¹⁰⁵⁷

The caliphate of al-Mustakfī II unfolded entirely within the reign of Jaqmaq's sultanate. Mamluk sources claim the sultan was particularly fond of the caliph with whom he had completed a mutual investiture.¹⁰⁵⁸ As external and domestic threats troubled the sultanate of Jaqmaq, the caliph served as an important symbol of order even at times when it failed to carry weight among rivals.¹⁰⁵⁹

¹⁰⁵³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:349 (8 Rabī' I/27 July); al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 13, 359; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144 (8 Rabī' I/27 July); Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:230 (5 Rabī' I/24 July). Ibn Iyās dates his birth to 795/1392-3 (*Badā'i*, 2:287); al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:219.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:144; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:230.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:532-33. Ibn Ḥajar had been one of the qadis presiding over the caliph's *bay'a* ceremony. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:230.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Al-Suyūṭī's father later received the honor of composing the caliph's investiture deed. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410; idem, *al-Taḥadduth bi-ni'mat Allāh* (vol. 2 of Elizabeth Sartain's *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background*), ed. Elizabeth Sartain (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1975), 2:9.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:52; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:269.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Advice literature produced in the court of Jaqmaq appears to have had an interest in the caliphs and their titles. Chapter 3 addresses the work of courtiers and scholars such as Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī and Aḥmad ibn 'Arabshāh.

When drought dangerously diminished the Nile in mid-Rajab 854/August 1450, Jaqmaq ordered al-Mustakfī II and other notables to embark on a lightning tour of local holy sites in Cairo.¹⁰⁶⁰ Encouraged by a slight increase in the water level, the sultan sent alms to al-Mustakfī II on 9 Rajab/18 August and ordered the caliph to distribute them at the Ribāṭ al-Āthār shrine (*maḥall al-āthār al-nabawiyya*) and, in the presence of relics associated with Muḥammad,¹⁰⁶¹ pray for God to send more water as his ancestor al-‘Abbās had done.¹⁰⁶² The sultan then sent the notables, including the market inspector (*muḥtasib*) and the *nāzir al-khāṣṣ* to prepare and distribute food at the Nilometer (*miqyās*). Al-Mustakfī had again received instructions to pray with the people at the Rawḍa Mosque wherein he stood to lead the congregation in supplications for rain, which other mosques repeated.¹⁰⁶³ Some days later on 15 Rajab/24 August Jaqmaq ordered the people to fast and pray for water in the desert. A massive assembly including the caliph, chief qadis, amirs, Sufis and other religious notables traveled to the tomb of Barqūq to pray for rain and offer two units of non-obligatory *nafl* prayer.¹⁰⁶⁴ The Muslims were joined there by Christians and Jews with their holy books, as well as Muslim children with copies of the Qur’ān tied to their heads.¹⁰⁶⁵ The ceremony included an eloquent *khutba* by the Shāfi‘ī qadi, who, flanked by al-Mustakfī and the three other chief qadis, delivered an impassioned plea for God to send rain.¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶⁰ For Nile levels at this time see: Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 2:98.

¹⁰⁶¹ Among the affects of the Prophet, it claimed to house “a spear, a walking stick, a stylet, an awl, tweezers, a comb of iron, and pieces of *kohl* stick, and bowl.” I thank Richard McGregor for allowing me to read his unpublished paper “Thinking About Looking: Relics and the Rhetoric of the Body” which he presented at the First Conference of the School of Mamluk Studies in Venice, Italy on 25 June 2014. See also: Aḥmad Taymūr, *al-Āthār al-Nabawiyya* (Cairo, 1951), 32-3; Iman R. Abdulfattah, “Relics of the Prophet and Practices of His Veneration in Medieval Cairo,” *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2014): 75-104.

¹⁰⁶² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 87; al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 310-1. Established in the thirteenth century to house relics transported from Medina, this structure, located in the south of Fuṣṭāṭ and alternately known as al-Athār al-Nabī, al-Athār al-Nabawiyya, or by its more “Mamluk” name, Ribāṭ al-Athār, was viewed as prestigious by the Mamluks early on during their rule. Sultans visited the structure seeking *baraka* in times of hardship. On the Ribāṭ al-Athār, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4:2:801-2; Taymūr, *al-Āthār al-Nabawiyya*, 27-36; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Patterns of Urban Patronage in Cairo: A Comparison between the Mamluk and the Ottoman Periods,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 232.

¹⁰⁶³ Al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 310-1.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the caliph and qadis went at least twice to the desert plain near Barqūq’s tomb. They performed prayer among the many throngs of people. See: *Nujūm*, 15:424-5.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:53-4; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:646; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 310-1; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:315-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:282. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:424.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:282.

On 2 Muḥarram 855/4 February 1451 after a brief illness the ascetic caliph reportedly died in his sixties at the Abbasid residence near the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa.¹⁰⁶⁷ Biographers stress the caliph's piety and position at court, although Ibn Taghrībirdī characterizes the caliph as a recluse who seldom interacted with people and remained scrupulously focused on the religious duties and dimensions of his office.¹⁰⁶⁸ Revered for his exceptional sagacity, al-Mustakfī II was said to be silent for long periods of time, seldom speaking unless he had something profound or valuable to say, or to deliver an unwavering ruling.¹⁰⁶⁹ In this, he chose not to follow his often opinionated brother al-Mu'taḍid II who frequently interacted with members of court, engaging with 'ulamā' of various rank.¹⁰⁷⁰ Instead, al-Mustakfī found pleasure in seclusion during his caliphate. Mamluk elite, who seemed highly appreciative of a caliph who bolstered his authority by rare and thus heavily-weighted speech, admired the caliph. Indeed Jaqmaq reportedly put great stock in the wisdom of al-Mustakfī, and was said to be aware of his intellectual assets.¹⁰⁷¹

Eulogies for the caliph likewise imply that contemporaries regarded him as a near perfect archetype for his office: frequently silent, pious, prudent, reserved, thoughtful, inclined toward great acts of charity, and actively engaged in the spiritual protection of the state.¹⁰⁷²

Both al-Mu'taḍid II and al-Mustakfī II stayed away from political affairs after the forays of their elder brother and father into the treacherous world of Mamluk politics. As caliphs in the first half of the fifteenth century, they focused on strengthening the religious authority of the Circassian sultans who invested them and busied themselves in pious and academic pursuits.¹⁰⁷³ While al-Mu'taḍid actively engaged in courtly life and knew how to navigate its contours, al-Mustakfī tended to remain aloof from things beyond the scope of religion. This brand of biddable Abbasid authority lent itself keenly to the Mamluk program.

¹⁰⁶⁷ According to al-Suyūṭī, the caliph died at the end of Dhū al-Ḥijja 854/January 1451. See: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410. However, several sources affirm that the death occurred on 2 Muḥarram 855/4 February 1451: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:1; idem, *Hawādith*, 101; idem, *Manhal*, 6:52; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:260; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:269; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 344, 359; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:329; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:287. Ibrāhīm al-Biqā'ī claimed that the caliph died on 3 Muḥarram/5 February. See: *Iḥḥār al-'aṣr li-asrār ahl al-'aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd al-'Awfī (Giza, 1992-3), 1:67, 405. See also: al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:219. It is unclear which disease claimed the life of al-Mustakfī II, though he had at least one daughter that died of the plague in Ṣafar 853/March-April 1449. See: *Ḍaw'*, 12:165.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:1.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī speculated that the caliph's extended silences may have stemmed from a lack of anything interesting to share in debate or conversation. See: *Manhal*, 6:52-3.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:53; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:261.

¹⁰⁷¹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:269; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91.

¹⁰⁷² Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith al-duḥūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn 'Izz al-Dīn (Beirut, 1990), 2:344-5; idem, *Manhal*, 6:52; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:261; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:328-9; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:657; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:287-8; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:219.

¹⁰⁷³ Garcin, "Histoire," 63.

The body of the caliph lay in state at the Mu'minī Muṣallā, and his funeral proved to be a well-attended affair with the air of tragedy and loss for the beloved figure.¹⁰⁷⁴ After the funerary prayer Jaqmaq personally served as a pallbearer for the caliph's coffin during the journey to its final resting place near the tomb of Sayyida Nafisa.¹⁰⁷⁵

Al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh (855-9/1451-5)

Consumed by illness at the end of his life, al-Mustakfī II failed to provide Mamluk authorities with a complete testament for the caliphate. Succession thus became a government issue and fell to Jaqmaq who summoned the surviving sons of al-Mutawakkil to appear in his presence.¹⁰⁷⁶ Abū al-Faḍl [or Abū al-Baqā']¹⁰⁷⁷ Ḥamza, a fourth son of al-Mutawakkil, had grown up during the caliphal reigns of his father and elder brothers, his qualifications seem merely to have been that he was the eldest living brother of al-Mustakfī II, which facilitated the matter. The Mamluk regime invested Ḥamza as al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh on 5 Muḥarram 855/7 February 1451.¹⁰⁷⁸ After he had received *bay'a* from the notables, a member of the judiciary interviewed the new caliph as to whether he consented to grant the sultanate to Jaqmaq and entrust him with the affairs of the Muslims, and a free hand to dispense with sovereign affairs as he saw fit. Upon answering all the questions in the affirmative, the caliph dressed Jaqmaq in the caliphal honors (*al-tashrīf al-khalīfātī*), sat and recited the opening chapter of the Qur'ān, before respectfully conveying formal greetings to the sultan.¹⁰⁷⁹

Al-Qā'im came to the caliphate amidst the customary pomp and rode in a grand procession to his house preceded by the qadis and notables. Few likely anticipated that the later

¹⁰⁷⁴ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:328-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:287.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:52; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:261; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:65; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:657; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:329.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:193; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 381; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:262; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:329; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:287-8; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:220.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-aṣr*, 1:68.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:432, 16:1, 193-4; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 381; idem, *Manhal*, 5:183-4; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:262-3; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-aṣr*, 1:68, 405; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:329; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:166; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:65; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:657; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 344; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:90; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410; idem, *Naẓm al-'iqyān fī a'yān al-a'yān* ed. Phillip Hitti (New York: al-Maṭba'a al-Sūriyya al-Amrīkiyya, 1927), 108 (4 Muḥarram 855); al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:657; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:287-8. Ibn Iyās claims that he was the only Abbasid caliph whose given name had been Ḥamza. See: *Badā'i*, 2:349.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:263.

intrigues of his brief reign would shatter nearly forty years of political quietism in the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo.¹⁰⁸⁰

The Affair of Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās

One of the first official duties of al-Qā'im was to join Jaqmaq in attending funerary services for Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Bārizī in early 856/1452.¹⁰⁸¹ Scarcely a year into his caliphate, al-Qā'im waded into government affairs on 9 Sha'bān 856/25 August 1452, attempting to use caliphal influence to intercede for the disgraced administrator, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās (d. 864/1459).¹⁰⁸² By 853/1449 al-Naḥḥās, originally an apprentice coppersmith, had risen quickly through Jaqmaq's government to wield power as a close confidant of the sultan. In his thirst for power and position, al-Naḥḥās accumulated many enemies, while nevertheless ingratiating himself in some circles, including that of the caliph. Eventually, the sultan exiled him to Ṭarsūs.¹⁰⁸³ In 856/1452, news reached al-Qā'im that the sultan had ordered al-Naḥḥās to sustain regular beatings in captivity. Using his sway with the sultan, the caliph encouraged Jaqmaq to allow al-Naḥḥās a secret return to Cairo to answer for himself. However, al-Qā'im's interest in the matter may not have been motivated by mere camaraderie, as al-Sakhāwī had it on the authority of al-Naḥḥās himself, that the disgraced courtier had bribed the caliph by offering him rights to some of his properties (*khāṣṣ*) in exchange for his support with Jaqmaq.¹⁰⁸⁴

Perhaps wishing to distance himself from the controversial figure, al-Qā'im recruited his nephew Mu'izz al-Dīn 'Abd al-Azīz (the future caliph al-Mutwakkil II) to intercede for al-Naḥḥās and accompanied him as he entered the Duḥaysha Hall (*Qā'at al-Duḥaysha*) in the citadel.¹⁰⁸⁵ The shamed bureaucrat kissed the feet of Jaqmaq, but the sultan, not wishing to be exposed at court as a hypocrite, denied knowledge of approving the visit and instead cursed al-

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:89; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 381; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:263; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 1:68-77; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:329; al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 344; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:288; Garcin, "Histoire," 63.

¹⁰⁸¹ Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-wafayāt al-shuyūkh wa-al-aqrān*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut, 1999), 1:111-2.

¹⁰⁸² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:440-1; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 1:226-8; al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 389; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:364-5; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:296.

¹⁰⁸³ For an overview of the whole affair see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:375-8, 16:210-1; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 7:63-6; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:364-5; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:296; Richard T. Mortel, "The Decline of Mamlūk Civil Bureaucracy in the Fifteenth Century: The Career of Abū l-Khayr al-Naḥḥās," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 2 (1995): 173-88; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Craftsmen, Upstarts and Sufis in the Late Mamluk Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 74, no. 3 (2011): 379-81; Petry, *Criminal Underworld*, 25-6.

¹⁰⁸⁴ See: *Tibr al-masbūk*, 390.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:680; Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 54-5; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 275-6.

Nahhās and took inventory of his many offenses.¹⁰⁸⁶ Perhaps wishing to appear sensitive to the caliph's interest in the matter, Jaqmaq commuted al-Nahhās's sentence to imprisonment in the tower of the citadel and, according to Ibn Taghrībirdī, discussed with 'Abd al-'Azīz the impact his eminent uncle had on the matter: "I intended to bisect [al-Nahhās], but for the sake of the caliph I have pardoned him." 'Abd al-'Azīz received a gift of one hundred dinars and the meeting adjourned. Jaqmaq's change of heart may have stemmed from pressure applied by the powerful enemies of al-Nahhās (notably the *nāzir al-khāṣṣ*, Šāhib Jamāl al-Dīn) who wished for him to remain imprisoned in Ṭarsūs and would have paid Jaqmaq to keep him there.¹⁰⁸⁷ On the surface, the caliph's intercession was sufficient to grant al-Nahhās a second hearing, though not powerful enough to secure the sultan's pardon, even if it appeared to spare the fallen bureaucrat future beatings and execution.

The Death of Jaqmaq and Rise of Īnāl

At the end of Jaqmaq's life observers assumed the sultan would name his son 'Uthmān successor. A number of amirs wished to discourage the selection, but the sultan could not be dissuaded. At an assembly on 21 Muḥarram 857/1 February 1453, Jaqmaq underscored the illusion that the final decision would be in the hands of the caliph and qadis.¹⁰⁸⁸ Al-Qā'im recognized the fitness of 'Uthmān, based on his aptitude and maturity, which facilitated a speedy caliphal pledge the same day. The remaining attendees joined in the *bay'a*, after which 'Uthmān, dressed in traditional black caliphal robes, paraded with emblems of sovereignty accompanied by the amirs and notables and dismounted at the sultan's castle. The amirs followed investiture tradition and the new sultan robed al-Qā'im and the amir Īnāl as *amir kabīr*. The pair also received double robes of gold-spun satin and gold-saddled horses. Al-Qā'im received 1,000 dinars and a generous *iqṭā'* in addition to one already held by the Abbasid family.¹⁰⁸⁹

As his father Jaqmaq sank deeper into illness, al-Manṣūr 'Uthmān took up affairs of state. On 3 Šafar 857/13 February 1453 al-Qā'im led funerary prayers for the only Egyptian ruler who Mamluk sources acknowledged as having held the distinct honor of receiving *bay'a* by three

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:441-2; al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 389-90; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:296. See also: Mortel, "Decline of Mamlūk Civil Bureaucracy," 186.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī *Nujūm*, 15:441-2; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:296. See also: Mortel, "Decline of Mamlūk Civil Bureaucracy," 185-6.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Schimmel interpreted this as evidence of Jaqmaq's piety. See: "Some Glimpses," 359.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:452-4, 16:23; idem, *Hawādith*, 381; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 1:288-90; al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 423-4; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:674-5; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:85; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:377-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:301; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Hawādith al-zamān*, 1:119.

Abbasid caliphs, indeed “a curious and strange thing which rarely occurred.”¹⁰⁹⁰ Some weeks later on 26 Šafar/8 March, Mamluk functionaries read ‘Uthmān’s investiture document aloud during a ceremony in the sultan’s castle in the citadel. Al-Qā’im oversaw the investiture, but much to his vexation, found himself seated unceremoniously on the ground beside the dais.¹⁰⁹¹ Nevertheless, the caliph refrained from displaying outrage at the sultan’s disregard for caliphal prestige and sidestepping the pageantry that al-Qā’im had supposedly worked hard to reintroduce during the first years of his tenure. The ceremony continued undisturbed and after the completion of the reading, al-Manšūr ‘Uthmān invested the caliph and other dignitaries.¹⁰⁹²

Shortly after ‘Uthmān began his sultanate, Īnāl prepared to seize power and conflict erupted in Rabī‘ I 857/March-April 1453. The Ashrafiyya faction joined forces with the Mu’ayyadiyya and Sayfiyya factions to coerce three former Zāhirī amirs of Jaqmaq and the treasurer to join them at Īnāl’s residence on Elephant Island. The majority of amirs pledged support to Īnāl, renounced al-Manšūr ‘Uthmān and donned battle gear. To challenge the sultan they applied for Abbasid sanction and summoned al-Qā’im to join their coup in its final stages of preparation. The three hostage Zāhirī amirs had been initially uncertain, but after the arrival of al-Qā’im and his encouragement for Īnāl, their confidence was secured. Ibn Taghrībirdī suggests that the caliph required little convincing and likely saw the rebellion as a timely opportunity to exact revenge against the careless son of Jaqmaq.¹⁰⁹³

The coup began with a battle at Rumayla Square during which many of the sultan’s mamlūks joined Īnāl. On 2 Rabī‘ I/13 March, the caliph, who enjoyed a fleeting spike in authority,¹⁰⁹⁴ addressed the public several times on the necessity and legality of deposing al-Manšūr ‘Uthmān. Emboldened by the caliph’s blessing, supporters of Īnāl besieged the citadel and attempted to cut the sultan’s supply lines. After two days of stalemate, al-Qā’im emerged to

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:455, 459; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 349; al-Biqā’ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr*, 1:302; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:675; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:382-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:303. See also: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 75. Ibn Taghrībirdī devotes a short section of his biography of Jaqmaq to the three caliphs that reigned during the sultan’s rule: *Manhal*, 4:299-300.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:35; al-Biqā’ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr*, 1:320; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:166; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:385-6; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:304; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:119-20.

¹⁰⁹² Some Mamluk historians retrospectively described al-Qā’im, in comparison to his four brothers, as haughty, rash, and greedy. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:167; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:90; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 410. For Ibn Taghrībirdī, the insult of the seating incident was unmistakable foreshadowing of events to come after the revolt of Īnāl: *Nujūm*, 16:35.

¹⁰⁹³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:35, 40-1, 193-4; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 169, 381-2; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:263. See also: al-Biqā’ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr*, 1:322-9; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:676-7; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 426; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 410; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:304; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:121.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677: *wa-ṣārat al-kalima lil-khalīfa*.

enthusiastically announce the deposition of ‘Uthmān in favor of Īnāl.¹⁰⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the young sultan stubbornly held fast in the citadel while his cannon pounded Īnāl’s men and inflicted heavy, though presumably unintentional casualties on the populace. For his part, the caliph attempted to gather all of his family members for fear that they might fall into the hands of ‘Uthmān, who would likely be advised to invest a new anti-caliph from their ranks.¹⁰⁹⁶

On 5 Rabī‘ I/16 March, Īnāl summoned al-Qā’im, the chief qadis, and the *kātib al-sirr* and listened at length to their strategies for legally deposing ‘Uthmān. The religious elite summoned a scribe to take dictation from the head Shāfi‘ī qadi ‘Alam al-Dīn Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī on the censure and deposition of the sultan. The resulting document, which was read before amirs and supporters, became the centerpiece of a rally for Īnāl as al-Qā’im and the qadis led cries for Īnāl’s nomination as sultan. Al-Bulqīnī interviewed the assembly on the nomination of Īnāl as sultan, which they unanimously accepted.¹⁰⁹⁷

After the Friday sermon at which special prayers were offered for “the caliph and the army of the Muslims,” the qadis departed from the prayer hall as renewed fighting against ‘Uthmān commenced.¹⁰⁹⁸ Al-Qā’im remained with Īnāl and together the pair entered the Ḥarrāqa pavilion after Īnāl’s soldiers stormed the royal stables and captured important Zāhirī amirs. Once ‘Uthmān’s fall seemed imminent Īnāl, joined by the caliph at his right, rode out with the army in grand procession. Onlookers gathered as Īnāl passed and ascended to the Ḥarrāqa pavilion.¹⁰⁹⁹

Three days later prominent government officials and soldiers gathered at the royal stables in ceremonial dress to witness al-Qā’im invest Īnāl as al-Malik al-Ashraf. In black caliphal robes and emblems, Īnāl rode to the sultan’s palace and took the throne in the Columned Hall. The amirs kissed the ground before him and he invested the caliph with a reversible green and white outer robe, a decorative brocaded Yalbughāwī band, and a gold-saddled horse. Four days of festivities continued in the sultan’s castle.¹¹⁰⁰ By mid-Rabī‘ II 857/April 1453, the sultan ordered the caliph and his family to relocate to the citadel to avoid political disquiet until fallout from the revolt ended.¹¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:44-5; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 169-70; al-Biqā‘ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr*, 1:327-31; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 3:166; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:88-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 2:304. For some comment on how the coup affected Mamluk bureaucracy, see: Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration*, 424.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 426.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:45-6; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 169; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:386; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:47-53.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:57-8; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 739; al-Biqā‘ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr*, 1:336-7; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677; idem, *Tibr al-masbūk*, 430; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 410; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:387-9. See also: Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 14.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 182; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:263.

Īnāl honored the caliph again in the citadel on 17 Rabī‘ II 857/27 April 1453 and al-Qā’im received a *kāmiliyya* overcoat with a sable fur lining and forty bushels of sugar.¹¹⁰² Some weeks later al-Qā’im and the qadis witnessed a reading of Īnāl’s diploma in the palace of the citadel on 5 Jumādā I 857/14 May 1453. Īnāl sat on a large pillow on the ground without a throne, while al-Qā’im sat on his right with the qadis in their assigned seats. After completion, the sultan robed al-Qā’im and the group disbanded.¹¹⁰³ Later in the month al-Qā’im made a public appearance at the funeral of the chief qadi Badr al-Dīn al-Baghdādī.¹¹⁰⁴

Al-Ashraf Īnāl, grateful for the caliph’s legitimating presence and the role he had played in deposing al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān, rewarded al-Qā’im financially and granted the Commander of the Faithful unprecedented influence as an unofficial advisor at a level far beyond any attained by his ancestors under the Baḥrī Mamluks.¹¹⁰⁵ Al-Qā’im enjoyed enormously the fruits of his collaboration with Īnāl but quickly fell prey to his own ambitions.

The Revolt of the Jaqmaqī Zāhirīs and the Sultan’s Purchased Mamluks

In Jumādā II 859/April-May 1455 some 500 of the sultan’s *julbān* (purchased mamlūk recruits) were ordered to travel to al-Buḥayra (northwest of Cairo near Alexandria) but refused, complaining that Īnāl had neglected to equip them with camels and other supplies. Frustration drove the contingent to renounce the sultan and make common cause with a group of Jaqmaq’s disgruntled Zāhirī mamlūks. The Zāhirīs begrudged Īnāl his deposition of their master ‘Uthmān, and their subsequent demotion in favor of Īnāl’s Ashrafi mamlūks. Likewise, the disenfranchised mamlūks of Barsbāy (also called Ashrafīs) turned out to join the Zāhirī mutineers. The Zāhirīs advised Īnāl’s unhappy *julbān* that any lasting political change could only prevail by way of an armed coup against Īnāl blessed by the very Abbasid caliph who had legitimized him.¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰² Ibid. See also: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:396.

¹¹⁰³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:67; idem, *Hawādith*, 184; al-Biqā’ī, *Iḥḥār al-‘aṣr*, 1:354-5; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:398; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 2:312. Al-Sakhāwī reports one final ceremony on 8 Jumādā I 857/17 May 1453 in which Īnāl was robed in a black caliphal robe and the caliph, qadis, and amirs ascended with him to the citadel whereupon he formally mounted the throne. See: *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:677.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Hawādith al-zamān*, 1:122.

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:89-90, 194; idem, *Hawādith*, 382; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:264; al-Biqā’ī, *Iḥḥār al-‘aṣr*, 1:354; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:166.

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:87-9; idem, *Hawādith*, 232-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 410; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:441; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:220. On the role of the *julbān* in this attempted coup, see: Amalia Levanoni, “The Sultan’s *Laqab*--A Sign of a New Order in Mamluk Factionalism?” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 97. On the instability in later Mamluk politics created by the demands of the *julbān* recruits, see: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 195; Garcin, “Circassian Mamlūks,” 297-8.

To this end, Zāhirī agents secretly visited the residence of al-Qā'im with the aim of courting caliphal sanction for the cause. The Commander of the Faithful mulled over possible outcomes and considered it prudent to betray Īnāl, perhaps hoping that the new group might yield even *more* influence.¹¹⁰⁷

Their morale having been strengthened by the caliph's assent, the rebels finished arming themselves in his presence. Various displaced mamlūks and starving peasants (*awbāsh* and *ḥarāfīsh*) came out to lend a hand. Gradually, the mutinous *julbān* who had instigated the affair, whether fretful of the consequences or doubtful in the ability of their Zāhirī allies, slowly began deserting and abandoned the latter to battle the forces of Īnāl, which easily scattered them after a brief skirmish. The victors promptly arrested al-Qā'im and brought him before the sultan and an assembly of dignitaries in the Rudaynī Mosque.¹¹⁰⁸ Expecting the worst, the caliph was said to be surprised by Īnāl thrice repeating that he had forgiven him, though the sultan's true attitude proved unsympathetic. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the awkwardness of the situation combined with anxiety over his imminent deposition, left the caliph mute from shock for almost an hour.¹¹⁰⁹ Once he had composed himself, perhaps after the grave reality of the predicament had set in, al-Qā'im, no doubt feeling that the jig was up, made a last ditch attempt at revenge by blurting out before the assembly, "I resign myself and [therefore] depose you!" (*khala 'tu nafsi wa- 'azaltuka*). The attending courtiers clamored as they digested the thorny implications now posed for the sultan's legitimacy. The chief Shāfi'ī qadī Ṣāliḥ al-Bulqīnī came to Īnāl's rescue, however, by reminding the court that the caliph, by joining with rebels, had forfeited his caliphal authority, including his (theoretical) right to remove the sultan. Legally, according to al-Bulqīnī's on-the-fly jurisprudence, the disgraced caliph was therefore free to be dismissed.¹¹¹⁰

The sultan harshly rebuked the caliph who abdicated in disgrace.¹¹¹¹ Al-Qā'im was then compelled to openly testified that he had no right or power to remove Īnāl.¹¹¹² The sultan ordered

¹¹⁰⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:89; idem, *Hawādith*, 382; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:264; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:131-2; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90. With part of his army in open revolt in the streets of Cairo, Īnāl, fearing the danger, ordered the caliph and his family to remain in confinement until the threat dissipated. Al-Qā'im refused, and went out to meet the rebels when they summoned him. See: Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 67; Dāhī, *al-Ra'y al-'amm fī 'aṣr al-mamālīk*, 64.

¹¹⁰⁸ Īnāl imprisoned or expelled the remaining Zāhirī rebels. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:90-1, 194; idem, *Hawādith*, 233, 382; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:132; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:166; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:102; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:689; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90. On the Al-Rudaynī Mosque, see: Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 53-4.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hadwadith*, 235; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:265.

¹¹¹⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:132; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:166; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90; Mar'ī ibn Yūsuf Karmī, *Nuzhat al-nāzirīn fī Ta'rīkh man waliya Miṣr min al-khulafā' wa-al-salāṭīn*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Kandarī (Damascus, Dār al-Nawādir, 2012), 75. See also: Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 67.

¹¹¹¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:90; idem, *Hawādith*, 235-6, 382; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 3:166; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411. See also: Garcin, "Histoire," 63-4.

the caliph to be incarcerated in the citadel's Fountain Hall (*Qā'at al-Baḥra*) and dismissed him from the caliphate.¹¹¹³ Left with a sudden vacancy in the holy office, the sultan summoned several prominent members of the Abbasid family including two sons of al-Mutawakkil: Mūsā (also known as Mūsā al-Hāshimī) and his younger brother Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf, to assess their suitability.¹¹¹⁴ At the outset Yūsuf's chances were greatly improved by his father-in-law, al-Bulqīnī (who likely wished to see his daughter's fortunes rise and was probably owed a favor by Īnāl because of his quick thinking), who advocated favorably on behalf of the Abbasid prince.¹¹¹⁵ Thus the choice landed on Yūsuf, who received *bay'a* as al-Mustanjid billāh Abī al-Muẓaffar before the sultan, qadis, amirs, and notables on 3 Rajab 859/19 June 1455.¹¹¹⁶

Īnāl's functionaries removed al-Qā'im from citadel imprisonment and sent him on horseback to begin a long journey into exile in Alexandria on 7 Rajab/23 June wherein the Commander of the Faithful would ultimately remain confined for several years before being shifted to a fortress residence that granted him unrestrained movement throughout the city. The deposed caliph lived in Alexandria until his death following a brief illness on 17 Shawwāl 862/28 August 1458. Al-Qā'im was interred near his full brother al-Musta'in and one of their sisters. Contemporary observers did not fail to notice the coincidence that both brothers had been exiled to Alexandria for their respective interferences in Mamluk politics.¹¹¹⁷

Al-Qā'im in the Sources

Ibn Taghrībirdī's coverage of the reign of al-Qā'im is rife with speculation and hearsay. We must accept that the caliph's motivations for joining the revolt against Īnāl are murky at best,

¹¹¹² Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 67.

¹¹¹³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:90-1, 194; idem, *Hawādith*, 233-8; idem, *Manhal*, 5:184; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:265; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:166; al-Suyūṭī said this was done in Jumādā II 859/May-June 1455 (*Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411). Chief Shāfi'ī qadi al-Bulqīnī, father-in-law of Yūsuf, may also have had a vested interest in helping his son-in-law become caliph and thus did what he could to secure the caliphate for him and rule the deposition as legal. See: al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 1:398 note 3; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:103; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91. On the *Qā'at al-Baḥra*, see: Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 275-6.

¹¹¹⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:988; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:443.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:267; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:132; Khaṭīb al-Jawharī [al-Ṣayrafi], *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr bi-abnā' al-'aṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1970), 365; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91.

¹¹¹⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 234-5, 382; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:265-6; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:132; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:443, 7:226; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:221. While it is worth mentioning that al-Bulqīnī's daughter Alif was wed to al-Mustanjid, she had already been married to two other important courtiers including the reigning *kātib al-sirr* and after him a Shāfi'ī qadi. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 12:7-8, 55; Schimmel, "Kalif und Sultan," 80; Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 237.

¹¹¹⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:90, 126, 193-4; idem, *Hawādith*, 233, 238, 380-3; idem, *Manhal*, 5:184; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:265; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 2:379; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:166; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:131; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:689, 718; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:90; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411; idem, *Naẓm*, 108; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:444, 6:43-4; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:349; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:220. The works of al-Suyūṭī disagree on the caliph's date of death. Some give 862/1457-8 (*Naẓm*), others 863/1458-9 (*Husn* and *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*).

but were likely to have been driven by the uncertain nature of Mamluk politics. However, if Ibn Taghrībirdī's interpretation is reliable, it seems that after weighing the risks, the caliph believed that his political venture would have gained him something. But what? Mamluk sources suggest the caliph was anxious to infuse his office with more ceremonial importance.¹¹¹⁸ One wonders if he was likewise interested in restoring some of its influence in temporal affairs. Jean-Claude Garcin understood al-Qā'im's participation in the revolt as a final deliberate attempt at independence for the caliphate and which the caliphs never again had opportunity to depart from their ceremonial role and residences in the citadel or in al-Kabsh.¹¹¹⁹

The ambitious al-Qā'im was not well-remembered by the *'ulamā'* who depicted him in an unflattering light. Even al-Suyūfī, champion of the Abbasid cause, viewed al-Qā'im as impetuous and driven by arrogance. Ibn Taghrībirdī dismissed him as shortsighted and ungrateful for the gains he had made under Īnāl.¹¹²⁰ In his remarks on the career of al-Qā'im, Ibn Taghrībirdī noted that the caliph had started in the service of Jaqmaq and later played a prominent role in the coup that had helped Īnāl to power. Because of the latter event, al-Qā'im enjoyed an elevation in material wealth and influence at court. More importantly, he had the sultan's respect and confidence, but in the end his thirst for power clouded his judgment and hastened his downfall.¹¹²¹

Al-Mustanjid billāh (859-84/1455-79)

Born in approximately 798/1396, Abū al-Maḥāsīn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf became the fifth and final son of al-Mutawakkil to hold the caliphate as al-Mustanjid billāh in Rajab 859/June 1455.¹¹²² Raised in the "lap of happiness" (*ḥujr al-sa'āda*), Yūsuf spent much of his childhood immersed in contemplative studies of the Qur'ān. Before receiving *bay'a* as caliph, al-Sakhāwī claims al-Mustanjid dreamt a "true vision" that the prophet Abraham had guaranteed his place in the caliphal succession.¹¹²³ After his investiture as caliph on 3 Rajab 859/19 June 1455, al-Mustanjid participated in the usual ceremonial rituals after being invested with the symbols of

¹¹¹⁸ Al-Qaramānī, *Akhhār al-duwal*, 2:221.

¹¹¹⁹ Garcin, "Histoire," 63; idem, "Circassian Mamlūks," 303.

¹¹²⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:194.

¹¹²¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:89-90; idem, *Hawādith*, 236; idem, *Manhal*, 5:183-4. I discuss Ibn Taghrībirdī's position on the Cairo caliphs at length in Chapter 4.

¹¹²² Al-Sakhāwī wrote that it was the night of 27 Ramaḍān 859/10 September 1455. See: *Daw'*, 10:329; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:326; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:689. The caliph was known alternately by the *kunyas* Abī al-Muzaffar and Abū al-Maḥāsīn. See: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:443-4. Al-Mustanjid spent the first few days of his reign as al-Mutawakkil, but later changed his *laqab* to al-Mustanjid billāh. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 235; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:266-7.

¹¹²³ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 10:329.

office: atop a decorated mount and surrounded by notables the new caliph followed a great procession down to his residence.¹¹²⁴

Before his death in mid-Jumādā I 865/February 1461 Īnāl left al-Mustanjid with the task of religiously authorizing the selection of his heir Aḥmad as sultan. The elderly *amīr kabīr* Khushqadam summoned al-Mustanjid and the qadis to the citadel and seated them in the tented pavilion (*dihlīz*) of the Duḥaysha hall. Al-Mustanjid and Khushqadam sat together in the upper part of the assembly room while the qadis sat in their traditional seats in front of the caliph in the forecourt beside the window grill.¹¹²⁵

After the pledge, the amirs and leading officials rose donning *kalafta* caps and white *ṭaṭar* coats according to the custom of the time.¹¹²⁶ The young sultan proceeded to the palace on horseback, al-Mustanjid riding at his side. The amirs and qadis walked before them until it became apparent that the caliph's horse was too powerful for him to control. The amirs kissed the ground for al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad Aḥmad, and drums sounded the proclamation requesting all of Cairo to pray for him. The sultan robed al-Mustanjid in a resplendent, reversible white and green silk overcoat with lavish embroidery. The caliph was also assigned the small town of Minbābā (or Inbābā) in Giza, while Khushqadam received a similar robe and over-cloak along with a horse and gold saddle.¹¹²⁷

The caliph led other dignitaries in offering their prayers and final respects to Īnāl at his bier in the citadel. With Aḥmad at his side, al-Mustanjid participated in the late sultan's funeral procession.¹¹²⁸

Al-Mustanjid and the qadis attended the reading of Aḥmad's diploma on 13 Jumādā II 865/26 March 1461 in the Qaṣr al-Ablaq.¹¹²⁹ The caliph received more gifts from the sultan including another similar robe with a brocaded sleeve and a gold-saddled horse.¹¹³⁰

¹¹²⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 382; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:266; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:689; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 5:444.

¹¹²⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:218; al-Biqā'ī, *Iḥār al-ʿaṣr*, 3:209-12; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:100-1; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:367, 369; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:153. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 95-6; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 48.

¹¹²⁶ On the dress of the Mamluk military class, see: Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 21-35.

¹¹²⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:219-20; al-Biqā'ī, *Iḥār al-ʿaṣr*, 3:234; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:370; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 95-6.

¹¹²⁸ Al-Biqā'ī, *Iḥār al-ʿaṣr*, 3:214-5; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:150-1; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:734; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:102; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 2:371.

¹¹²⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:226; al-Biqā'ī, *Iḥār al-ʿaṣr*, 3:233; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:734-5; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:105. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 96. On the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:669-71; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 60-1; idem, *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 136.

¹¹³⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:226; al-Biqā'ī, *Iḥār al-ʿaṣr*, 3:209-10; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:105.

Few may have expected the young son of Īnāl to enjoy a long sultanate. By Ramaḍān of 865/June 1461, Khushqadam had amassed formidable support, including even followers of the sultan who feared the loss of their stipends. Moreover, important religious personnel such as al-Mustanjid and the qadis, as well as principal administrative officials, abandoned al-Mu'ayyad Aḥmad.¹¹³¹ Barely opposed, Khushqadam seized the sultanate on 18 Ramaḍān 865/27 June 1461 which, after investiture by the caliph, he maintained until his death in Rabī' I 872/October 1467.¹¹³²

Wishing to be named al-Zāhir before his amirs, Khushqadam ordered al-Mustanjid and others to repeat the *bay'a* ceremony the next day at the Ḥarrāqa pavilion.¹¹³³ After the ceremony, the new sultan ascended the citadel in a black robe with the emblems of power; the army marching before him and the caliph mounted at his side. Later al-Mustanjid again received a green and white silk robe and a gold-saddled horse.¹¹³⁴ The sultan ordered a reading of his investiture deed at the palace before the caliph, qadis, and amirs in Shawwāl 865/July 1461.¹¹³⁵ Later that month, Jānim al-Ashrafī (d. 867/1462), the viceroy of Damascus, challenged Khushqadam's rule and mobilized his forces toward the Siryāqūs monastery.¹¹³⁶ Using the pretext of a robing ceremony, the sultan ordered al-Mustanjid, along with the qadis and important amirs to remain in the citadel to prevent Jānim from luring them away.¹¹³⁷ Deprived of the caliph and unable to intimidate Khushqadam, Jānim ultimately obeyed the sultan's order to depart.¹¹³⁸ The qadis and amirs returned to their typical quarters but Khushqadam refused to allow al-Mustanjid to return to his family residence and forced the caliph to remain a permanent resident of the citadel in which he lived in the vacated house of al-Manṣūr 'Uthmān ibn Jaqmaq for nearly twenty years until his death, confined largely to the sultan's royal court (*ḥawsh*).¹¹³⁹ The caliph

¹¹³¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:246.

¹¹³² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 398-9; al-Biqā'ī, *Izhār al-'aṣr*, 3:277-89; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:151-2; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:738; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:111; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:377; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:154.

¹¹³³ Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:151-2; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:378-9.

¹¹³⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:253-4.

¹¹³⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 406 (12 Shawwāl 865/21 July 1461); al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:121; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:384.

¹¹³⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:259; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:382; See also: Ulrich Haarmann, "Al-Mustandjīd (II) bi 'llāh, Abu 'l-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf ibn al-Mutawakkil Muḥammad," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 7:727.

¹¹³⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 398-9; Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:154; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:119; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:382; Haarmann, "al-Mustandjīd."

¹¹³⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:382.

¹¹³⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:259; 'Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr bi-abnā' al-'aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 1, 115, 183, 316, 427; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 10:329; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:91; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:119; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:383, 457, 3:151.

was denied access to the city but Khushqadam ordered that rations of chicken, lamb, sugar, and watermelon be delivered to the Commander of the Faithful each day until the sultan's death.¹¹⁴⁰ Later Mamluk sources speculated that the caliph's mandatory residence in the citadel dated from this incident and that subsequent sultans maintained the practice for reasons of preventing access to the caliph in the event that challengers threatened the incumbent.¹¹⁴¹

Amidst a harsh Egyptian drought in Shawwāl 866/July 1462,¹¹⁴² Khushqadam's advisor *shaykh* Amīn al-Dīn al-Āqṣarāy directed the sultan to assemble all living members of the Abbasid family, regardless of age; give them water with which to rinse their mouths, then spit into an empty vessel. The collected water, now containing Abbasid *baraka*, should then be poured into the well of the Nilometer (*fasqiyyat al-miqyās*). The sultan set to work gathering the Abbasids on the Nile at the Old Cairo home of al-Mustanjid's brother 'Abd al-'Azīz.¹¹⁴³ After the "Abbasid water" was emptied into the well, Ibn Iyās claims the river's official level raised nearly two fingers (*zāda al-nīl iṣba 'ayn*).¹¹⁴⁴

The caliph maintained the ceremonial role attached to his family and in Dhū al-Ḥijja 870/July-August 1466 Mamluk authorities called upon al-Mustanjid to lead funerary prayers for the sultan's eldest daughter Khawand Faraj.¹¹⁴⁵ After Khushqadam himself died two years later, the amir Yilbāy seized power for two months in 872/1467.¹¹⁴⁶ Although summoned to provide investiture, harsh travel conditions delayed the arrival of al-Mustanjid and the qadis during their journey from the Columned Hall to the palace of the sultan. Few details of the ceremony have survived though Yilbāy sat on the throne and invested the amir Timurbughā as commander in chief before robing and investing the caliph and other notables.¹¹⁴⁷ The sultanate of Yilbāy proved

On the *hawsh*, see: Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 32, 51-2, 56-9; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 274-6. Ibn Iyās claims Mamluk authorities even barred the caliph from attending the funeral of his sister, al-Sitt Maryam. See: *Badā'i*, 2:457.

¹¹⁴⁰ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:119; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:383.

¹¹⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:259; idem, *Hawādith*, 407; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:119, 7:227; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:382, 457. Although his household benefitted from a full pantry, compared with his immediate predecessors, al-Mustanjid had very little political influence. See: Haarmann, "al-Mustandjīd."

¹¹⁴² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 429; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:145-7.

¹¹⁴³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:395.

¹¹⁴⁴ The Abbasid ritual began the process, but prayers from chief qadī al-Bulqīnī were also thought to have helped. See: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:146-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:395. On popular celebrations at the Nilometer well, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 73. On the "finger" (*iṣbā'*) as a unit of measurement, see: Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 2:36.

¹¹⁴⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 593. *Khawand* is a Turkish word of Persian origin used as "princess" in the Mamluk period. See: 'Abd ar-Rāziq, *La femme*, 97-9.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Hawādith al-zamān*, 1:179-80. Al-Sakhāwī writes that Khushqadam died on 10 Rabī' I 872/9 October 1467 and was prayed over at the Gate of the Citadel (*Bāb al-Qal'a*) by the caliph and others, though not the qadis. See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:209; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:790.

¹¹⁴⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:357; idem, *Hawādith*, 602, 614-5; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:791; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:280; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:459.

brief, as the army lost patience with him after two months and installed Timurbughā in his place on 7 Jumādā I 872/4 December 1467.¹¹⁴⁸ Al-Mustanjid and two of the chief qadis (the remaining two had fallen ill) extended their hands thereby granting *sharī'* approval to the deposition of Yilbāy. In a black robe and sultanic emblems Timurbughā left the Ḥarrāqa pavilion with only the caliph riding before him.¹¹⁴⁹ From the throne in the sultan's castle, Timurbughā invested the caliph with a robe and also invested the amir Qāyṭbāy, head of the guards, as commander of the army in his place.¹¹⁵⁰ Timurbughā was an agreeable candidate for both the '*ulamā*' and Mamluk elite but was sacked shortly after by his executive secretary Khayrbak al-Khushqadamī, who with the help of other conspirators, arrested the sultan on 5 Rajab 872/30 January 1468.¹¹⁵¹ Unsure how to proceed, some of the purchased mamlūks went to the barracks and armed themselves, others wanted to secure access to the caliph and others still sought to plunder the sultan's quarters.¹¹⁵²

Qāyṭbāy (872-901/1468-96)

Although poised to take the throne, Qāyṭbāy restrained himself until notaries testified to the abdication, involuntary or not, of Timurbughā.¹¹⁵³ Modern scholars understand Timurbughā's resignation to have been made under duress, though al-Mustanjid and the qadis testified that it had been tendered of his own free will and thus the *bay'a* to his successor was valid.¹¹⁵⁴ The caliph proclaimed the dismissal of Timurbughā and requested that allegiance be sworn to Qāyṭbāy as al-Malik al-Ashraf.¹¹⁵⁵

In a ceremony at the Ḥarrāqa pavilion the religious dignitaries, including the caliph, pledged allegiance to Qāyṭbāy on 6 Rajab 872/31 January 1468.¹¹⁵⁶ The sultan, dressed in black Abbasid robes, mounted a horse and rode with the emblems of his office as his sultanate was proclaimed in the streets. He invested al-Mustanjid before the noontime call to prayer and

¹¹⁴⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:365; idem, *Ḥawādith*, 615; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:294-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:468.

¹¹⁴⁹ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:296; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:468. On this episode see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:367-72.

¹¹⁵⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:373; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 2:468.

¹¹⁵¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 615-7; Carl Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (London and Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 22.

¹¹⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:387-8.

¹¹⁵³ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:306-7.

¹¹⁵⁴ Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 37.

¹¹⁵⁵ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:306-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:4.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Ḥawādith*, 617-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 411; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:310.

accepted the *bay'a* of his amirs who then kissed the ground before him.¹¹⁵⁷ It is worth mentioning that by the late Mamluk period, particularly during the reigns of Qāyṭbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, Abbasid robing ceremonial seems to have received less attention from chroniclers. To one modern observer, robing no longer appeared

central to the sultan's own enthronement, which underscored the derivation of his legitimacy from the caliph's administration of an oath to rule justly [as well as] pledges of obedience (*bay'a*) to him from the four qāḍīs and senior amirs. The sultan swore his oath on a Koran held out to him by the caliph while the former was seated under the Abbasids' black banner. He wore a black *jubba* or sleeved tunic of cotton and/or silk rather than wool.¹¹⁵⁸

The Ottoman-Mamluk struggle for domination in eastern Anatolia reignited in the reign of Qāyṭbāy. After Mehmed II conquered Qaramān in 880/1475, Dulqadirid-controlled Elbistan acquired strategic importance as a buffer zone between the two empires. The Cairo-backed candidate Shāh Budāq had been installed by Khushqadam, but was ousted in 870/1465 when his Ottoman-backed brother Shāh Sūwār took control. Shortly after ordering a retributive campaign, Khushqadam passed away, leaving unfinished affairs in the hands of Qāyṭbāy.

On 14 Dhū al-Qa'da 872/5 June 1468, after an initial defeat by Shāh Sūwār some months earlier, Qāyṭbāy convened a council in the *hawsh* area of the citadel to discuss his empty treasury. The caliph al-Mustanjid, seated at the sultan's right, was joined by the four chief qadis, along with the *shaykh al-islām* Amīn al-Dīn al-Āqṣarāy and other important amirs and '*ulamā*'. Speaking on behalf of the sultan's cause, the *kātib al-sirr* pointed out that many of the citadel elite (*al-nās*) had extra funds that ought to have been transferred to the treasury to finance a campaign against Shāh Sūwār in northern Syria. The sultan and his spokesmen argued that "surplus" funds must also be extracted from other subjects, local merchants, as well as money tied up in pious endowments (*awqāf*) if the army was to be successful. The caliph and qadis consented after the argument had been couched in religious terms with the pretext of defending the Muslims in the sultan's realm. However, the *shaykh al-Islām* remained adamant on the illegality of seizing funds and his arguments forced an exasperated Qāyṭbāy to abandon the idea.¹¹⁵⁹ Ultimately, to the relief of those amirs who stood to lose funds, nothing was decided. A short time later the sultan met again with the amirs and religious authorities, emphasizing the

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:394; idem, *Hawādith*, 617-8; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 37.

¹¹⁵⁸ Petry, "Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt," 360. See also: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:3.

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 635-7. Al-Ṣayrafi dates a similar meeting to 16 Rabī' II 873/3 November 1468. See: *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr*, 33-5; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:14-5. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 98; Muḥammad M. Amīn, *Awqāf wa-al-hayāt al-ijtimā'iyya fī Miṣr, 648-923 A.H./1250-1517 A.D.: dirāsa ta'rīkhiyya wathā'i'iqiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍa al-'Arabiyya, 1980), 326-7; Lev, "Symbiotic Relations," 23-4.

importance of fighting Shāh Sūwār, which the caliph and qadis decried as something harmful to the greater interest of the Muslims.¹¹⁶⁰

Finally, after successfully freeing up funds by denying stipends to older soldiers, orphans, and women, Qāyṭbāy was able to send a Mamluk expedition towards Elbistan.¹¹⁶¹ The campaigns against Shāh Sūwār proved highly expensive and by the end of his first year in power, Qāyṭbāy, in hope of raising funds, committed several arbitrary and unpopular acts. Among them, the sultan stripped al-Mustanjid of revenues from Minbābā in Dhū al-Qa‘da 872/May-June 1468, a holding that the caliph had received seven years earlier from al-Mu‘ayyad Aḥmad ibn Īnāl. A short time later, the sultan also confiscated al-Ṣābūnī Island from the caliph and redistributed sections of it to his mamlūks.¹¹⁶²

By 877/1472, Qāyṭbāy’s dispute with Shāh Sūwār was still unresolved, causing the Mamluk sultan again to seek the approval of the religious authorities to seize merchants’ revenues, after a congratulatory session with the caliph and qadis.¹¹⁶³ Ultimately, Shāh Sūwār was not subdued until Rabī‘ I 877/August 1472, with considerable damage done to Mamluk coffers and prestige.¹¹⁶⁴

Despite his confiscation of several caliphal *iqṭā‘*s, Qāyṭbāy continued to enjoy the reputation of a fervent ally and loyal defender of the Abbasid caliphate.¹¹⁶⁵ Indeed, much of the Sunni world recognized the Mamluk sultan as one of the strongest rulers alongside his Ottoman counterpart. Foreign rulers widely accepted the preeminence of Qāyṭbāy and in Jumādā II 876/November-December 1471 Cairo received a visit from an ambassador of the Central Indian ruler of Mālwa, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Shāh Khaljī (873-906/1469-1501) who requested a *taqlīd* from the Abbasid caliph for his master’s enthronement. The Indian embassy presented gifts to both the Mamluk sultan and the Abbasid caliph of Egypt. Qāyṭbāy draped the ambassador in a robe and received recognition as suzerain. The sultan then sanctioned the caliph’s confirmation of Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s succession and al-Mustanjid signed a decree.¹¹⁶⁶ After receiving acknowledgment, Ghiyāth al-Dīn struck coins describing himself as “the one upon whom authority has been

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 637.

¹¹⁶¹ Lev, “Symbiotic Relations,” 24.

¹¹⁶² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Hawādith*, 633; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:327; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 3:13.

¹¹⁶³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 3:85-6. See also: Amīn, *Awqāf*, 328.

¹¹⁶⁴ Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 196-7; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 57-72; Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 86-92.

¹¹⁶⁵ Later courtiers of the sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī discussed Qāyṭbāy’s respect for the caliphate and the Iranian jurist Khunjī visited Qāyṭbāy’s Egypt and commented on the lofty position of the Abbasid caliph and his protection by the Mamluk sultan. See Chapter 4.

¹¹⁶⁶ Al-Ṣayrafi, *Inbā‘ al-ḥaṣr*, 362; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Taḥadduth*, 157; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 3:65; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 74; Ghaythā’ Aḥmad Nāfi‘, *al-‘Alāqāt al-‘Uthmāniyya al-Mamlūkiyya: 868-923/1464-1517* (Beirut, 2005), 86.

conferred by the caliph of the age in the worlds.”¹¹⁶⁷

Later Years, Death, and Succession

Al-Mustanjid lived quietly in the citadel investing sultans and accepting their gifts.¹¹⁶⁸ His reign marked a change in Abbasid living conditions, as forced occupancy in the citadel became mandatory for the caliphs, allowing them to be held under close watch and kept away from the sultan’s enemies.¹¹⁶⁹ The specific extent to which Qāyrbāy’s confiscations affected Abbasid family income remains unclear, though the caliph must have been eased of some financial burdens thanks to ongoing donations made at the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa. The historian and physician ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ al-Malaṭī, in addition to mentioning al-Mustanjid’s great wealth, described the caliph as polite, modest, and well-mannered enough, though criticized him for being ignorant of the Islamic sciences, void of the virtues of education, and most tellingly, prone to family squabbles stemming from his excessive greed.¹¹⁷⁰

The caliph wed his only daughter, a woman mentioned among chroniclers of the period as “Sitt al-Khulafā” (d. 892/1487), to the Syrian amir Khushqaldī al-Baysuqī.¹¹⁷¹ Unmentioned events forced Khushqaldī’s exile to Syria and al-Mustanjid attempted to use his court connections to expedite an annulment. The caliph negotiated at length with the qadis who, although they had the power to dissolve the marriage, withheld their support. The caliph used his monthly access to Qāyrbāy in Dhū al-Qa‘da 876/April 1472 to receive a proper hearing for the case and seek the sultan’s intervention, which he obtained some time thereafter.¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁶⁷ Margoliouth, “Caliphate Historically Considered,” 337.

¹¹⁶⁸ Garcin, “Histoire,” 64.

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:259.

¹¹⁷⁰ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 7:226. Further evidence of al-Mustanjid’s affluence may come from a 20 Rajab 869/18 March 1465 *waqf* document listed in Muḥammad M. Amīn’s catalogue of the Dār al-Wathā’iq collection which names the caliph and the amir Aḥmad ibn al-Khiṭā’ī as administrators. See: *Fihrist wathā’iq al-Qāhira ḥattā nihāyat ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk (239-922H / 853-1516M) ma’a nashr wa-taḥqīq tis ‘at namādhij* (Cairo, 1981), 34 no. 155.

¹¹⁷¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 336; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:85, 240-1. On Sitt al-Khulafā’, see: al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 8:69-70; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 12:54-5; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:269, 456; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:1026-7; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:151, 240; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-khillān*, 1:77 (*bint al-khalīfa al-Mustanjid billāh*).

¹¹⁷² According to al-Sakhāwī, the religious authorities, after some deliberation, ultimately agreed to annul the marriage following a referendum among the qadis and their deputies concerning two key issues: 1) that the amir Khushqaldī was understood to be an unworthy match (although no further detail is given) for Sitt al-Khulafā’, and 2) the minority of the caliph’s daughter at the time of her marriage. The Ḥanbalī qadi had initially opposed the annulment based on a particular reading of his legal rite, though after opening the floor to more opinions and the reading of a text on the matter, the annulment passed in consideration of the two issues of incompatibility (whether social or financial) and the bride’s young age. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:456; idem, *Wajīz*, 2:874; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 7:62, 79; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:85. For the marriages of Sitt al-Khulafā’ as a case study, see: Rapoport, *Marriage*, 80; Bernadette Martel-

At peace with his restricted powers and remembered elsewhere for modest simplicity,¹¹⁷³ the Commander of the Faithful passed away in his late eighties or nineties on Saturday 24 Muḥarram 884/17 April 1479 after suffering two years of paralysis.¹¹⁷⁴ After funerary prayers in the citadel, the Mamluks laid the caliph to rest in the family crypt.¹¹⁷⁵ After news of the caliph's death reached Syria in Ṣafar 884/April-May 1479, special prayers were offered on his behalf at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus.¹¹⁷⁶

Al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh II

(884-903/1479-1497)

With no male heirs, al-Mustanjid had turned to his extended family to select a successor.¹¹⁷⁷ The most senior Abbasid at the time was his uncle Mūsā al-Hāshimī (d. 891/1486), a wealthy son of al-Mutawakkil respected for his lineage, but rumors of his questionable business dealings and alleged mental instability excluded him from office.¹¹⁷⁸ The grandsons of al-Mutawakkil, notably from the line of his son Ya‘qūb (who had never held the caliphate) were considered next.¹¹⁷⁹ These included ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz¹¹⁸⁰, Ismā‘īl¹¹⁸¹, and Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad.¹¹⁸² The latter commanded respect but failed to secure the appointment.¹¹⁸³

Thoumian, *Délinquance et ordre social: l'État mamlouk syro-égyptien face au crime à la fin du IXe-XVe siècle* (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2012), 198.

¹¹⁷³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:151; Haarmann, “al-Mustandjīd.” Al-Ṣayrafi frequently states that “he had nothing of the caliphate but its name/title (*ism*).” See: *Inbā‘ al-ḥaṣr*, 1, 115, 183, 316.

¹¹⁷⁴ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 7:185, 221; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 10:330; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:301; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:91. Al-Suyūṭī and Ibn Iyās differed over whether the caliph was aged over 80 (*Badā‘i* ‘, 3:151) or over 90 (*Ta‘rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 411-2). According to al-Qaramānī, the caliph died 14 Muḥarram 884/7 April 1479. See: *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:221. Elsewhere al-Sakhāwī lists the caliph's death in 886/1481. See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:326.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:151; al-Qaramānī, *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:221; Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafīsa,” 52.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:229.

¹¹⁷⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta‘rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 412; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:151.

¹¹⁷⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 10:188; idem, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:413; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:988; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:151, 225. Five of Mūsā's brothers had held the caliphate, and when he was snubbed in favor of a nephew, “[Mūsā] nearly died of the insult.” Al-Malaṭī describes Mūsā as a colorful character who attracted numerous enemies through dishonest dealings. Some of these enemies even conspired to murder the elderly Abbasid, but ultimately took pity in light of his advanced years. See: *Nayl al-amal*, 7:227, 8:16. In his autobiography, al-Suyūṭī counts Mūsā al-Hāshimī among his many teachers. See: *al-Taḥadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh*, 68.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:378-9.

¹¹⁸⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 4:236-7.

¹¹⁸¹ Ibid., 2:309.

¹¹⁸² Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 4:236, 10:86; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:877-8.

¹¹⁸³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i* ‘, 3:125. Muḥammad ultimately succumbed to plague in Dhū al-Ḥijja 881/March-April 1477 though his own descendants survived as caliphal contenders under his son Khalīl.

Ultimately, al-Mustanjid appointed his 62 year-old nephew ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.¹¹⁸⁴ By no means a newcomer to the world of Mamluk politics, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz originated from *awlād al-nās* stock on the side of his mother Hājj Malik, the daughter of a royal mamlūk named Muqbil.¹¹⁸⁵ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had previously represented the Abbasid family in 856/1452 in the court of Jaqmaq during the hearing of Abū al-Khayr al-Nahhās.¹¹⁸⁶ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz received *bay‘a* as caliph from Qāyrbāy and his amirs.¹¹⁸⁷ The caliph had initially sought the regnal title of al-Musta‘izz billāh but when the name tested unfavorably at court, he considered calling himself al-Musta‘īn billāh before ultimately settling on the *laqab* of his popular grandfather. Thus, he received investiture as al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh on 26 Muḥarram 884/19 April 1479 by the qadis and other notables.¹¹⁸⁸ After the pledge ceremony al-Mutawakkil II, dressed in caliphal finery atop a gold-saddled horse, led a solemn parade with Abbasid heraldry on display. He left the citadel and headed towards the caliphal residence preceded by the four qadis and major officials, though he later returned to his uncle’s lodging in the citadel.¹¹⁸⁹

Diplomatic Relations

The majority of al-Mutawakkil’s caliphate fell within the last two decades of Qāyrbāy’s rule during an escalation of pressure placed on Mamluk Egypt by the Ottoman empire of Bayezid II (886-918/1481-1512). Although some in Cairo had celebrated the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 857/1453 as a pan-Islamic victory, frictions accelerated between the Mamluks and Ottomans once the latter emerged as a power in the region under Mehmed II.¹¹⁹⁰ Relations deteriorated as the ongoing Mamluk-Ottoman rivalry in the Anatolian marches accelerated over

¹¹⁸⁴ Al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 412. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was born in Rabī‘ I 819/April-May 1416, an older son of Ya’qūb ibn al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 4:236; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:897; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 7:227; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:151, 379.

¹¹⁸⁵ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 4:236; al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 412; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:152. See also: Tarkhān, *Miṣr*, 68.

¹¹⁸⁶ See above pp. 180-81.

¹¹⁸⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:151-2, 379. According to Ibn Iyās, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was the only acceptable candidate.

¹¹⁸⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:320; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:897; al-Suyūfī, *Ḥusn*, 2:92; idem, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 412; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:151; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:222 (16 Muḥarram); Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Beirut, 1964), 3:184. The Damascene chronicler Ibn Ṭūlūn, far less interested in (or less informed on) the lives of the Cairo caliphs than his Egyptian contemporary Ibn Iyās, mentions in 885/1480 that an anonymous nephew of al-Mustanjid had assumed the caliphate but does not identify him as al-Mutawakkil II until 889/1484. See: *Mufākahat al-khillān*, 1:5, 51, 59, 63.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:70-1. For their part, the Ottomans demanded Mamluk recognition for their dominant position. Mehmed II sought to extend his influence to the Ḥijāz by building wells to assist pilgrims. The Mamluks, since the time of Shaykh, wanted to preserve a border zone separating their territory from the Ottomans. See: Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 107-8; Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 65.

Mamluk interference in the Ottoman succession crisis that followed the death of Meḥmed II in 886/1481. The sons of the Ottoman sultan quarreled over the sultanate until Bayezid II, the choice of the army, bested his father's intended successor Cem and forced his flight to the court of Qāyṭbāy which stoked an enduring suspicion on the part of Bayezid.¹¹⁹¹

Mamluk-Ottoman relations strained once again over the Dhulghadir principality when the Ottoman-backed candidate, Bayezid's own father-in-law, 'Alā' al-Dawla was successfully installed in 884/1479 and Istanbul supported his fight against the Mamluks in Muḥarram 889/February 1484. In response, Qāyṭbāy sent a party of mamlūks to Aleppo to survey the Anatolian frontier and bolster the Syrian garrison. When it was confirmed that the Ottomans had undermined Mamluk interests in the region, the sultan sent his special envoy, the amir Jānībak Ḥabīb, with gifts for Bayezid II in hopes of restoring peace.¹¹⁹²

To further impress the Ottoman sultan, Qāyṭbāy ordered al-Mutawakkil II to draft a special diploma recognizing *de facto* Ottoman authority over territory conquered from the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor and named Bayezid II as the sultan in Anatolia (*sulṭān 'alā bilād al-Rūm*). The document "confirmed that which God had entrusted to his hand from the land of disbelief (*bilād al-kufriyya*)" and implied that the Ottomans would not receive Abbasid approval for gains made at the expense of fellow Muslims, particularly the Mamluk sultan and his Turkmen allies in Anatolia.¹¹⁹³ Drawing heavily on allusions to the Qur'ān, prophetic traditions, and early juristic treatises, the document extolled the benefit of cooperation between the two powers. In his presentation at the Ottoman court, Jānībak Ḥabīb was instructed to emphasize important precedents. Qāyṭbāy's chancery attached a written memorandum from al-Mutawakkil II to the document, the tone of which meant to reconcile Cairo and Istanbul.¹¹⁹⁴ Despite the warm

¹¹⁹¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 413. The Mamluk sultan's monopoly on the *ḥajj* pilgrimage and provocative confiscation of lavish gifts sent to Istanbul by the prince of India also did little to ease growing tensions. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:215. For an overview of Mamluk-Ottoman relations leading up to this period, see: Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 60-130; Ralph S. Hattox, "Mehmed the Conqueror, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Mamluk Authority," *Studia Islamica* 90 (2000): 105-23; idem, "Qāyṭbāy's Diplomatic Dilemma Concerning the Flight of Cem Sultan (1481-2)" *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 177-90; Cihan Yüksel Muslu, "Ottoman-Mamluk Relations and the Complex Image of Bāyezīd II" in *Conquête ottomane de l'Égypte (1517): Arrière-plan, impact, échos*, ed. Benjamin Lellouch and Nicolas Michel (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 51-76.

¹¹⁹² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:215.

¹¹⁹³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:213, 215-6. See also: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 197; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 93; Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 128; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 199; Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate*, 29-30.

¹¹⁹⁴ The document itself has not survived and is only described by Ibn Iyās. See: *Badā'i'*, 3:215.

reception and robe of honor draped upon the shoulders of Jānībak Ḥabīb, Mamluk diplomacy fizzled as the two sides embarked on several years of conflict from 890-6/1485-91.¹¹⁹⁵

After a short stay at Qāyṭbāy's court, the Ottoman prince Cem left his family behind in Cairo and joined his remaining forces to make war on his brother Bayezid II. The campaign came to naught. Finding all access to Mamluk territory blocked by his rival, Cem accepted an invitation from the Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, Pierre d'Aubusson, to come to the island of Rhodes, beginning a lengthy period during which the defeated prince became a political pawn for the various European rulers in their dealings with the Ottomans.

Some years later, Qāyṭbāy, encouraged by Cem's family surviving in Egypt, began negotiations to recover Cem, who was now in France, and bring him back to Cairo. The Sultan also hoped to use him for his own purposes against the interests of Bayezid II during the ongoing Ottoman-Mamluk struggle. The various rulers of France, however, as well as the Pope, persevered with their own designs on Cem, making his extraction very difficult.¹¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, Qāyṭbāy selected Lorenzo de Medici, the Duke of Florence, to be his mediator with the rulers of Europe.¹¹⁹⁷ In Dhū al-Qa'da 892/November 1487, Qāyṭbāy sent a messenger to Florence and presented Lorenzo with a request that Cem be returned to Mamluk territory, and if not, that the Ottoman prince should instead be given to the Pope or other rulers who could ensure he would be kept away from Bayezid II. According to Shai Har-El,

The Mamluk ambassador also asked Lorenzo to intercede with the Pope, to whom he brought a letter from the 'Abbasid Caliph in Cairo. In the letter, the Caliph reminded the Pope that the detention of Cem was a breach of the agreement between d'Aubusson and Cem, concluded when the latter had taken refuge in Rhodes and asked him to set Cem free and allow him to join his family in Egypt.¹¹⁹⁸

For his part, Lorenzo presented the request to the Pope, though Qāyṭbāy's wishes appear to have been ignored. The Christian rulers, who ultimately wanted to see Cem convert to Christianity and lead a new anti-Ottoman crusade, clearly understood the great value of a pretender to the Ottoman throne. Thus, Qāyṭbāy may have sought, though in vain, to use the highest office in Islamdom (the Abbasid caliphate) to influence the papacy. After having spent time at Rhodes, various castles in France, and later in Rome as a guest of the Pope, Cem died in Naples in 900/1495.¹¹⁹⁹

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:214-76; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawāḍith al-zamān*, 1:306, 312, 325-8; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 93; Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 133-51, 163-214.

¹¹⁹⁶ Har-El, *Struggle for Domination*, 152.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹¹⁹⁹ Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 83-9.

The true extent of Ottoman interest or receptivity towards the Abbasid caliphate is unclear. The caliphate retained the appeal of classical Islamic prestige, though the situation had changed since the days when Mamluk primacy under Barqūq overshadowed the power of Bayezid I, who had appealed to the Cairo caliphate in his struggles with Temūr. By the late fourteenth century, however, the Ottoman masters of *ghazwa* and the conquerors of Constantinople were likely far less in awe of the faltering guardians of a powerless scion of the Abbasid family.¹²⁰⁰

Ceremonial in the Court of Qāyṭbāy

By the end of the fifteenth century, Mamluk court culture expected the five chief religious functionaries (represented by the caliph and the four chief qadis) to make monthly visits to the citadel to pay respects to the sultan.¹²⁰¹ This was especially important for the major milestones of the regime such as religious festivals, moon sightings, or congratulating the sultan on a triumphant return to his capital.¹²⁰² The practice had begun under al-Mustanjid and continued with some regularity until the end of the Mamluk sultanate.¹²⁰³ On most occasions, the caliph arrived at the citadel from his residence and upon his entry into the sultan's sitting room, the sultan would descend his throne to sit briefly beside the caliph before the latter departed and the qadis stayed behind to attend to religious business or offer their counsel.¹²⁰⁴

In addition to paying formal respect to the sultanate, the visits offered the caliph an opportunity to hold the sultan's attention and bring personal issues to his attention. The sultan could also question the caliph and qadis on legal matters such as the legality of securing funds from questionable sources.

¹²⁰⁰ The Ottomans themselves may have had a fairly consistent history of using both *khalīfā* and *khilāfā* in various contexts within their diplomatic vocabulary both with foreign princes and in their own letters within the family. More work needs to be done to supplement the initial presentation by Sir Thomas Arnold. See: *Caliphate*, 129-38.

¹²⁰¹ Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 74.

¹²⁰² Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 327; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:361, 4:244, 269, 295-6. On one such occasion to mark Qāyṭbāy's return to Cairo in Jumādā I 891/May 1486, the caliph and the qadis greeted him as part of a celebration and the city was decorated. On the role played by the chief religious functionaries at public festivals, see: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 77-9. On the importance of parades and processions in the Mamluk period, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, 74-5. See also: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 101; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 106.

¹²⁰³ The earliest reference seems to be al-Mustanjid's visit with the qadis to discuss the marriage of his daughter Sitt al-Khulafā' in Dhū al-Qa'da 876/April 1472. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:85. The qadis had been attending the sultan each month for some time, but it was a first for the Abbasid caliph who joined them regularly from then on.

¹²⁰⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 327.

The caliph held the symbolic duty of serving as a living “seal” to agreements and thus became indispensable to the sultan in matters of authenticating agreements with amirs or mamlūks. In Rabī‘ II 894/March 1489 the sultan’s mamlūks threatened to revolt over pay concerns. Qāyṭbāy mediated the affair with the help of the ‘*ulamā*’. After the parties reached a settlement, the sultan summoned al-Mutawakkil II from his residence near the *ḥawsh* to seal the agreement. Before the caliph and the qadis, the mamlūks pledged a new oath of allegiance to Qāyṭbāy.¹²⁰⁵ Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī continued the practice in his sultanate, often in rituals involving the supposed Qur’ān of the “rightly-guided” third caliph ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.¹²⁰⁶

Despite the dignity of his office, the Abbasid caliph of Cairo apparently remained an accessible target for other courtiers. A rather curious incident in Rabī‘ II 894/March 1489 found al-Mutawakkil II accused of gross misconduct (‘*azā’im*’) by an unnamed plaintiff (or plaintiffs) who had complained to the sultan about what had been described as the caliph’s “humbling and heinous” actions. Nevertheless, the unknown matter appears to have been settled quietly without further commentary from the sources.¹²⁰⁷

Family Properties and Landholdings

By the time al-Mutawakkil II assumed the caliphate, Qāyṭbāy had already significantly reduced Abbasid landholdings by reassigning Minbābā and al-Ṣābūnī Island. The caliph’s finances suffered yet another blow when Qāyṭbāy’s government removed the Nafīsī shrine and related *waqfs* from Abbasid administration.¹²⁰⁸ Although earlier caliphs had used most of the revenue generated by access to the shrine, al-Suyūṭī depicts al-Mutawakkil II as a faithful servant of Sayyida Nafīsa, disinterested in the accompanying financial benefits, too shy to take its resources and quick to redistribute profits elsewhere for upkeep, maintenance, and distribution to the poor.¹²⁰⁹ The shrine was restored to Abbasid control, however, at the end of the fifteenth century, when al-Mutawakkil II was nearing death. The shrine subsequently remained in the family until the Ottoman conquest.¹²¹⁰

Qāyṭbāy was an enthusiastic participant in *mawlid* festivals celebrating the birth of the

¹²⁰⁵ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:1079; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 3:262.

¹²⁰⁶ Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 72.

¹²⁰⁷ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 8:150. Ibn Iyās is silent on the matter and I have not found any other references to the incident.

¹²⁰⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:31, 4:237; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:92; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 1:2:378, 5:192. Once before, the shrine had been reassigned to the amir Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Baktamur in 766/1364-5 during the reign of al-Mutawakkil I but later restored to the Abbasid family in 789/1387. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:100; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 1:2:17. See also: Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafīsa,” 42.

¹²⁰⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:92.

¹²¹⁰ Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafīsa,” 42-3.

Prophet as well as saintly figures such as Sayyida Nafisa. For his part, the caliph al-Mutawakkil II, at the behest of the sultan, participated in festive celebrations at the shrine in 889/1484 and 890/1485. The four chief qadis and Cairene notables attended each year, and the Nafisī *mawlid* was also known as the caliph's *mawlid* (*mawlid al-khalīfa*) as the presence of the Commander of the Faithful in his capacity both as host and “cousin of the messenger of God,” proved useful at popular celebrations dedicated to the birth of members of the Prophet's family.¹²¹¹

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Nafisī shrine succeeded in generating heavy revenues for the Abbasid family. In addition to regular pious donations from pilgrims and profits from the sale of devotional items (oil, candles, incense, etc.), income also came from opportunities to participate in nearby functions. Prominent funerals, for example, proved lucrative for the Abbasid family. After the burial of a daughter of a rich notable close to the tomb, the caliph, his family, the caretakers of the shrine, and local students all received generous offerings during the lavish funeral for which they could be persuaded to lend blessings and prayers.¹²¹²

Other Abbasid landholdings apparently drew the interest of Mamluk authorities when the small village annex (*manshiyyat*) of Dahshūr, officially an ongoing charitable trust¹²¹³ bequeathed to the caliph's family as part of the inheritance of his aunt Maryam, a daughter of al-Mutawakkil I, became the focus of unwanted attention.¹²¹⁴ Maryam had held the land for some time as an *iqṭā'* until she passed it on to the family and it fell under the supervision of her nephew al-Mutawakkil II. In 892/1487, the amir Asanbāy al-Ashrafi claimed to have a legal basis to encroach upon a portion of the estate. Asanbāy, who enjoyed influence in both military and religious circles, became more vociferous in his claims and a public hearing on the matter took place in which the qadis, after having surveyed the disputed section of Dahshūr to assess its resources and suitability for hunting, listened to the testimony and proofs provided by Asanbāy's deputy Ibn Muẓaffar, and ultimately concluded that the claim was lawful. For his part, al-Mutawakkil II deliberately kept a low profile at the initial hearing, perhaps for fear of inviting reprisals from Asanbāy and his supporters. The chief qadis determined the matter in Jumādā I 892/May 1487, and almost

¹²¹¹ Al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 6:372-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:206. See also: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 77-8; idem, “Some Glimpses,” 371; Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafisa,” 39. On *mawlid* celebrations in Cairo including that of Sayyida Nafisa, see: Rudolf Kriss, *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islam* (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1960-62), 1:55-9; Tetsuya Ohtoshi, “*Tasawwuf* as Reflected in *Ziyāra* Books and the Cairo Cemeteries,” in *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l'époque mamelouke*, eds. Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra (Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2006), 315. For Ibn Taghrībirdī's description of the sultans' participation in earlier *mawlid* festivals, see: *Nujūm*, 12:72-4.

¹²¹² Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 7:54, 12:164. See also: Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafisa,” 41-2; Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 354.

¹²¹³ Al-Sakhāwī refers to it alternately as *khayriyya* land and as a *ṣadaqa jāriyya*. See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:422; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:998.

¹²¹⁴ For a succinct biography of Maryam bint Muḥammad al-Mutawakkil, see: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 12:125.

unanimously sided in favor of the amir, save for the Mālikī qadi who, according to al-Sakhāwī, may have had his own reasons for resenting Asanbāy. Al-Mutawakkil II kept silent once again, partially, we are to believe, because of his indifference towards the property in question, and also due to wariness concerning Asanbāy.¹²¹⁵

Some years later, in Jumādā II 899/March 1494, a kitchen fire broke out in the caliph's living quarters in the citadel which ultimately spread to the sultan's storehouse and burned most of Qāyṭbāy's prized and costly war tents. Enraged, the sultan evicted al-Mutawakkil II from his residence in the *ḥawsh* near the al-Baḥra Hall of the citadel, and ordered him to live elsewhere in the city. The caliph had no choice but to move with his family into another residential living space (*qā'a*) near the Nafīsī shrine. According to Ibn Iyās, the caliph himself had not been involved in the fire and it was rather a rumor started by those who were jealous of his position.¹²¹⁶

Death of Qāyṭbāy

With the onset of old age, Qāyṭbāy's faculties began to falter and the acting *atābak* Timrāz al-Shamsī hoped to install the sultan's adolescent son Muḥammad long enough to secure the sultanate for himself. Before Timrāz could act, however, a group of conspirators led by the amir Qānṣūh al-Khamsī swiftly recognized the boy as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad [IV] (901-4/1495-8) as a compromise candidate.¹²¹⁷ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV received investiture as sultan by al-Mutawakkil II and the qadis the day before his father's death on 26 Dhū al-Qa'da 900/18 August 1495.¹²¹⁸

The reign of the adolescent al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV, which unfolded during the political crisis following Qāyṭbāy's death, proved brief and troubled, though he did establish some effective rule.¹²¹⁹ The young sultan also had brief relations with al-Mutawakkil II after his accession to the sultanate. Forced to live outside the citadel as a *persona non grata* after a kitchen fire destroyed Qāyṭbāy's property, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad reversed his father's policy, and after three years of living near the Nafīsī shrine, resumed Khushqadam's previous ruling that required the caliphal family to reside within the citadel confines.¹²²⁰

¹²¹⁵ Al-Sakhāwī made no secret of the high regard in which he held Asanbāy. See: *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 2:422-3; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:998-9.

¹²¹⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-tāmm*, 3:132; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:300-1. See also: Elizabeth M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1:88-90; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 9.

¹²¹⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:321-34; Ibn Ṭulūn, *Mufākahat al-khillān*, 1:167; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 116-7.

¹²¹⁸ Ibn al-Shihna, *al-Badr al-zāhir fī naṣrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qāyṭbāy*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1983), 35-45.

¹²¹⁹ Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 264.

¹²²⁰ Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 13-4.

Ibn Iyās expressed disapproval at one incident in which the young sultan snubbed the Commander of the Faithful at the *ʿīd* festival of 902/1497. The caliph entered the sultan’s presence in the Baḥra Hall to congratulate him on the occasion but al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV curtly dismissed the caliph in order to spend time with individuals deemed unsuitable by Ibn Iyās, or at least hardly on par with the traditional stature of the Abbasid caliph. The author of the *Badāʾi* mentions that the sultan sent thanks to the caliph, but his failure to receive the Commander of the Faithful was evidence of the sultan’s “lack of education.”¹²²¹

Machinations in the Scholarly World

Like his father and some recent ancestors, al-Mutawakkil II had been trained in Quranic studies and sat at the feet of a series of reputable experts in the Islamic sciences.¹²²² He received formal authorization (*ijāza*) to transmit his learning in a number of subjects and the scholarly establishment recognized his ability to narrate ḥadīth.¹²²³ Mamluk sources describe al-Mutawakkil II as a man of profound talent: an intellectual giant with encyclopedic knowledge capable of deducing sound Islamic rulings. The caliph also proved to be an avid student of religious sciences and a master calligrapher possessing a unique style.¹²²⁴ The caliph’s academic talents deemed him worthy of receiving his own secretary (*dawādār*), ʿUmar, a descendant of the famous mamlūk Taghrībirdī, to attend on him.¹²²⁵

The caliph’s uncle, al-Mustakfī II, had been a patron and benefactor of the Suyūṭī family of Egypt, notably the Shāfiʿī scholar Abū Bakr Kamāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 885/1480).¹²²⁶ This elder al-Suyūṭī, father of the more famous religious scholar Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān,

¹²²¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾi*, 3:361; Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 354.

¹²²² Al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 4:326-27; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:92; al-Qaramānī, *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:222.

¹²²³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:92.

¹²²⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾi*, 3:379.

¹²²⁵ Ibid., 4:101.

¹²²⁶ Al-Suyūṭī’s father Abū Bakr Kamāl al-Dīn (d. 885/1480) had been the “*imām*” of the caliph al-Mustakfī II (845-55/1441-51) and one of the religious tutors of the Abbasid family. Al-Suyūṭī’s father later received the honor of composing the caliph’s investiture deed. The younger al-Suyūṭī, on the recommendation of al-Mustakfī’s nephew, al-Mutawakkil II, was later named head of the mosque complex of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr in 891/1486. Ten years later, al-Suyūṭī again used his relationship with al-Mutawakkil II to be briefly named “*qāḍī kabīr*” by caliphal delegation. (See the discussion below). On the close relations between the Suyūṭī and Abbasid families, see: al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 4:69, 11:72-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 410; idem, *Al-Taḥadduth bi-Niʿmat Allāh*, 8-10; ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-ʿābidīn bi-tarjamāt Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿAṣr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Damascus, 1998), 57-8. See also: Garcin, “Histoire,” 34-7, 65-6; Sartain, *al-Suyūṭī*, 1:22, 81-2.

distinguished himself as tutor to the Abbasid family: he had instructed al-Mustaʿīn and one of his sons, as well as al-Mutawakkil II for some time during sessions at the family residence.¹²²⁷

Well aware of his debt to the father of al-Suyūṭī, al-Mutawakkil II may have felt obligated to the son.¹²²⁸ The younger al-Suyūṭī had also played a part in the caliph's training and helped sharpen the expertise which allowed him to attain *ijāzas* in various fields of Islamic science. The caliph also commissioned al-Suyūṭī to compile at least two books on Abbasid virtue and family history.¹²²⁹ In Rabīʿ II 891/April 1486 al-Mutawakkil II recommended al-Suyūṭī, perhaps at the latter's behest, for the position of administrator of the mosque complex of Baybars after the death of the preceding director Jalāl al-Dīn Bakrī.¹²³⁰

Nearly a decade later, in Ṣafar 902/October 1496 amidst the atmosphere of chaos and confusion after the death of Qāyṭbāy and the succession of his adolescent son al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV, al-Suyūṭī used his ties to the caliph to attempt to secure religious authority. Al-Suyūṭī, a longtime critic of the four grand qadiships established by Baybars, put forward the idea of a newly-created post of executive qadi (*qāḍī kabīr*) and persuaded al-Mutawakkil to name him to the office with his caliphal sanction and issue a document to that effect. In theory, the post would have granted al-Suyūṭī power to appoint and dismiss magistrates all over Islamdom.¹²³¹

Betrayed by the proposal, the four chief qadis voiced their outrage and derided the caliph for what they perceived as his ignorance and treachery. Al-Mutawakkil II defended himself against detractors: "What part did I have in this? It was *shaykh* Jalāl al-Dīn who showed me that this position harkened back to antiquity when the caliphs chose to [fill positions] with the wise man they considered most capable."¹²³²

Little choice remained to al-Mutawakkil II but to rescind the document. Al-Suyūṭī left no account of the incident from his own point of view and Ibn Iyās chose tactfully to tiptoe around the matter: "We pass in silence over the details of the affair which caused a great deal of conflict,

¹²²⁷ Abū Bakr was one of his many teachers. Al-Mutawakkil II was competent in religious sciences, handwriting, and linguistics. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 412; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:379. The claim that al-Mutawakkil II was a son of al-Mustaʿīn has found its way into some modern scholarship, see: Lewis, "Abbāsids"; Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*, 7. However, Ibn Iyās names al-Mutawakkil II as a son of Yaʿqūb, a son of al-Mutawakkil I who never succeeded to the family office. See: *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:379.

¹²²⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:974.

¹²²⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:92. Two of the known titles were: *al-Asās fī faḍl Banī al-ʿAbbās* and *Rafʿ al-bās ʿan Banī al-ʿAbbās*.

¹²³⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:974; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:228.

¹²³¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:339. Under the Ayyubids, Tāj al-Dīn ibn al-Aʿazz held a post with similar power, and al-Suyūṭī, ever the diligent student of history, convinced the caliph to advocate for such a position on the strength of Islamic precedents in Abbasid Baghdad. For the text of the document, see: al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-ʿābidīn*, 172-4.

¹²³² Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3:331, 339.

until emotions gradually subsided.”¹²³³ Modern historians read the incident as a shrewd power-play by al-Suyūṭī with the aim of securing more strength for the caliphate while bolstering his own power during a weak moment for the sultanate.¹²³⁴ As it played out, neither the qadis (who stood to lose a great deal) nor the caliph (reluctant to face scrutiny and major responsibility) supported al-Suyūṭī’s attempt to reinvigorate caliphal authority.

Death and Succession

A man in his sixties at the start of his 19-year caliphate, al-Mutawakkil’s health steadily deteriorated until by Muḥarram 903/late August 1497 he was scarcely able to leave his bed. The caliph no longer attended monthly salutations for the sultan and had to be carried on a litter (*maḥaffa*) whenever he left his home.¹²³⁵ As he grew frailer, al-Mutawakkil II turned his attention to the issue of caliphal succession. The caliph’s union with an Abyssinian slave had produced al-Ruknī ‘Umar (d. 913/1508), who, although an esteemed prince at court, was not selected to hold the family office.¹²³⁶ Among the wives of al-Mutawakkil II was Amīna (d. 915/1510), daughter of his uncle al-Mustakfi II and together in 851/1447-8 the cousins begat a full-blooded Hāshimī son whom they named Sharaf al-Dīn Ya‘qūb.¹²³⁷ Contemporary Mamluk observers made much of the child’s lineage and watched his career with interest.¹²³⁸ The elderly caliph al-Mutawakkil II summoned his son Ya‘qūb, (by then a 50-something, graying man with poor eyesight), to designate him as *walī al-‘ahd* with a testament authenticated by the four chief qadis.¹²³⁹ Ya‘qūb, and his uncle, Muḥammad,¹²⁴⁰ were consecutively named as the heirs to the caliphate, but when the latter died in 881/1476, some in the family held that the claim of Muḥammad transferred to

¹²³³ Ibid., 3:339.

¹²³⁴ Margoliouth, “Caliphate Historically Considered,” 335; Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 31-2; Garcin, “Histoire,” 65. Regarding al-Suyūṭī’s peculiar silence on the matter, see: Marlis J. Saleh, “Al-Suyūṭī and His Works: Their Place in Islamic Scholarship from Mamluk Times to the Present,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 78.

¹²³⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 3:376, 378.

¹²³⁶ Ibid., 4:128.

¹²³⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 412; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 10:285; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 3:379, 4:171, 5:389; Quṭb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 3:184.

¹²³⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 413; Ibn Iyās (*Badā’i*’, 3:379) described him as a “purebred” in the exclusive company of three other full Hāshimī pedigree caliphs: ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī (d. 50/669), and the Abbasid caliph al-Amīn (d. 189/813).

¹²³⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 412. According to Ibn Iyās, no caliph, Umayyad or Abbasid, had ever before carried the given name Ya‘qūb. See: *Badā’i*’, 3:380.

¹²⁴⁰ Al-Sakhāwī described Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb (817-881/1414-76) as more or less suitable for the family office, and claimed that he spent at least a quarter of a century engaged in scholarly pursuits with teachers including Shams al-Badr, al-Jamāl al-Amshāṭī, al-‘Izz ‘Abd al-Salām al-Baghdādī as well as his peers including al-Suyūṭī. See: *Ḍaw’*, 10:86. In his obituary for Muḥammad, Ibn Iyās extended him titles suitable to an Abbasid crown prince or heir apparent: *al-jannāb al-nāṣirī*. See: *Badā’i*’, 3:125. On the *jannāb* title for use with heirs to the caliphate or sultanate, see: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Cairo, 1987), 8, 189.

his son Khalīl.¹²⁴¹ Al-Mutawakkil II passed away in Old Cairo (Miṣr al-‘Atīqa) several days later aged about 84.¹²⁴² The night before his solemn state funeral, presided over by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV and his father’s amirs, the caliph’s body was transferred to his residence adjacent to the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn.¹²⁴³ The young sultan prayed for the caliph at the Mu’mini fountain before his interment at the family mausoleum. Mamluk sources praised both his erudition and public persona.¹²⁴⁴

Al-Mustamsik billāh (903-14/1497-1508 and 922-3/1516-7)

Although the *bay‘a* ceremony for Ya‘qūb proceeded according to plan and the Mamluk notables invested him as Abū al-Ṣabr al-Mustamsik billāh on 26 Muḥarram 903/24 September 1497, mounting family squabbles within the Abbasid clan disrupted his caliphate from the outset.¹²⁴⁵ A month after al-Mustamsik had been named successor, his cousin Khalīl challenged his caliphate at the inaugural ceremony at the citadel on 13 Ṣafar 903/11 October 1497. Over the course of the proceedings Khalīl loudly heckled his cousin and shouted: “This fellow has poor eyesight which invalidates his accession to the caliphate!” Puzzled by the outburst, and presumably unaware of the classical stipulations for the caliphate, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV had defended the choice arguing that al-Mustamsik’s *father* had been caliph and no better proof of his entitlement to office was necessary. Other amirs, likewise annoyed by the interruption came forward to defend al-Mustamsik, claiming that he was the most suitable member of the Abbasid family, and the challenger left the citadel frustrated. The qadis deemed a second performance of the *mubāya‘a* superfluous, as al-Mustamsik had previously taken office by virtue of the *‘ahd* from his father. Mamluk grandees brought emblems of the caliphal office to decorate the caliph as he parted from the citadel meeting, dressed in a robe of honor escorted back to his living quarters in a solemn procession.¹²⁴⁶

¹²⁴¹ Al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw‘*, 10:86; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘*, 3:378. This document and order of succession would erupt in a bitter family quarrel in 914/1508.

¹²⁴² His date of death was most likely 29 or 30 Muḥarram 903/27 or 28 September 1497. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 413 (who thought it was the last day of the month); al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:222.

¹²⁴³ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Hawādith al-zamān*, 2:21.

¹²⁴⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 413; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘*, 3:379; Rāgib, “Sayyida Nafīsa,” 52.

¹²⁴⁵ Mamluk sources date the start of his reign to 3 Ṣafar 903/1 October 1497. See: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 413; Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘*, 3:141, 380.

¹²⁴⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘*, 3:380; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:222.

Ultimately al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV was betrayed by his *atābak* Qānṣūh al-Khamsī when his officers seized the gate of the chain, held it, and summoned the caliph and qadis to invest him as sultan and announced the deposition of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. In honor of his master Qāyṭbāy, Qānṣūh became al-Ashraf.¹²⁴⁷ The young sultan was murdered by a group of his father's mamluks in Giza on 15 Rabī' I 904/31 October 1498. Qānṣūh al-Khamsī was thereafter deposed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's uncle and former leader of his entourage, al-Zāhir Qānṣūh.¹²⁴⁸ Qānṣūh was merely the nominee of the more powerful amir Ṭūmānbāy who hoped to seize power at an opportune time. His plans came to naught, however, and instead another contender, Jānbalāṭ al-Ashrafī, became sultan in Dhū al-Ḥijja 905/July 1500. After his investiture, Jānbalāṭ persuaded al-Mustamsik to continue living at his father's former residence in the citadel.¹²⁴⁹ In Jumādā I 906/November 1500, Jānbalāṭ, aware of the fragility of his regime, attempted to swear his officers to fidelity over the "Qur'ān of 'Uthmān" in the presence of al-Mustamsik and the four qadis.¹²⁵⁰ The measure proved insufficient to safeguard Jānbalāṭ's reign, and Ṭūmānbāy staged his return to Cairo from Damascus in Jumādā I 906/November 1500. Worried over reports of his impending return to the city with a large army, the sultan hung his own standard from the Gate of the Chain and summoned soldiers and officers to the citadel, along with members of the Abbasid family from all walks of life, as well as the chief qadis.¹²⁵¹ In the end, Jānbalāṭ could do little to stop the arrival of al-ʿĀdil Ṭūmānbāy who began a brief reign after securing a public endorsement from al-Mustamsik in Jumādā II 906/December 1500.¹²⁵²

Politics shifted a final time at the end of the year when some of the amirs pushed the reluctant *dawādār* and veteran Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī forward as the next sultan. Mamluk authorities summoned al-Mustamsik and the qadis to invest him and draw up the necessary documents. The Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī qadis had been reluctant to participate before a firm consensus had been reached, but the caliph came prepared to perform his duty.¹²⁵³

¹²⁴⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:342.

¹²⁴⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:404-5; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:59-60.

¹²⁴⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:439; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:104.

¹²⁵⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:454. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV had also demanded that his own mamlūks swear loyalty to him on the 'Uthmān Qur'ān four times (and they *still* betrayed him according to Ibn Iyās). See: Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 105 note 122.

¹²⁵¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:456-7.

¹²⁵² Ṭūmānbāy had apparently received *bay'a* a month earlier, though not from the caliph. Jānbalāṭ later died in exile in Alexandria. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:401-5, 438-9, 453, 457, 463-4, 4:2-4; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufaḥḥat al-khillān*, 1:230; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:58-60; 108-11, 117; Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 198; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 125-32; Garcin, "Circassian Mamlūks," 297.

¹²⁵³ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:121-2; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 129.

In a solemn ceremony in Dhū al-Qa‘da 906/May-June 1501 al-Mustamsik and the four qadis presided over an official reading of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī’s investiture deed.¹²⁵⁴ The five men ascended the citadel at the start of Muḥarram 907/July 1501 to congratulate the sultan at the start of the year.¹²⁵⁵ At the time, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had been wrestling with the issue of how to raise funds to pay his mamlūk recruits.¹²⁵⁶ He wanted to manipulate *waqf* yields and proposed a system to the qadis which, after some discussion, they unanimously condemned.¹²⁵⁷

Cash shortages often increased anxiety among the troops and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, fearing rebellion (compounded by the escape of some imprisoned mamlūks that threatened disorder in early 907/1501), continued earlier practices of ordering amirs to swear fealty over the Qur’ān of ‘Uthmān in the presence of the Abbasid caliph until the end of his reign.¹²⁵⁸ The sultan hoped that his officers would not break faith based on the relics of the heroic and sacred past, and the watchful gaze of the “cousin of God’s Messenger.”¹²⁵⁹ Thus in this way, the caliph, along with the other religious notables and the Qur’ān of ‘Uthmān, served as an important symbol of religious accountability thanks to their “sacred presence.”

To bolster his religious credentials in the face of accusations of greed and pettiness, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī laid the foundation for a number of pious structures and placed emphasis on the caliph and qadis as guests of honor. In Dhū al-Ḥijja 908/June 1503 he invited them to a banquet to celebrate the completion of his mosque and mausoleum complex at the time of the *‘īd al-aḍḥā* festival.¹²⁶⁰ The five chief religious authorities likewise attended a state ceremony as the sultan’s honored guests in Rabī‘ II 909/September-October 1503.¹²⁶¹

The Deposition of al-Mustamsik

¹²⁵⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:8-9.

¹²⁵⁵ Ibid., 4:14.

¹²⁵⁶ Indeed the rule of both al-Nāṣir Qānṣūh and Tūmānbāy ultimately collapsed because the sultans had sought to tax the Mamluk elite in order to fund their new recruits. See: Garcin, “Circassian Mamlūks,” 297.

¹²⁵⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:14-5; Amīn, *Awqāf*, 337; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 146.

¹²⁵⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:18. With the escaped mamlūks on the loose in Cairo and sedition rampant, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī summoned the Qur’ān of ‘Uthmān on several occasions and, in the presence of the caliph and chief qadis, swore his officers not to collude in rebellion against him.

¹²⁵⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:18. For example, before accepting the fealty of the amir Sībāy in Shawwāl 911/February-March 1506, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī first ordered him to register with the administrator Azdamur and swear loyalty on the ‘Uthmān Qur’ān while al-Mustamsik and the qadis looked on. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:88-9. This practice does not appear to have been in use during the long reign of Qāyṭbāy. See: Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 134.

¹²⁶⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:52-3; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Hawādith al-zamān*, 1:175. Al-Ghawrī was fond of embarking on building projects including lavish gardens in Cairo which he pursued until he was distracted by the Ottoman threat in 918/1512. See: Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 169.

¹²⁶¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:58.

For the duration of his caliphate, al-Mustamsik dutifully served as a pious officiator of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's ceremonies and stayed away from politics. Although his illiteracy and poor eyesight distanced him from the academic legacy of his father, the issue provided fodder for continued attacks by his cousin Khalīl who had grown no less covetous of the family office in the years since his cousin's caliphal inauguration.

In early Sha'bān 914/late November 1508 Khalīl vigorously renewed efforts to contest the suitability of al-Mustamsik to hold the caliphate which ended in an embarrassing altercation in the sultan's court during the caliph's monthly greetings to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī.¹²⁶² Khalīl, long aware of al-Mustamsik's ailing eyesight, again challenged the caliph publicly and pulled no punches the second time: "Your caliphate is invalid due to your blindness." The forty-four year-old son of al-Mustamsik, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, rushed to his father's defense by deflecting attention to a speech impediment that prevented Khalīl from properly pronouncing the Arabic letter *rā'*, thereby invalidating his prayer due to his inability to correctly recite the opening chapter of the Qur'ān (*al-fātiḥa*) integral to Muslim prayer. No doubt amused, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī demanded a public demonstration of Khalīl's performance before the qadis, and after several moments of awkward stammering, Khalīl proved unable to reach the end of the chapter. Ibn Iyās described the ordeal as deeply agonizing for all who observed.¹²⁶³

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī declared a recess and announced that the qadis would adjourn to resolve the caliphate question over several days. Authorities added the name of Muḥammad, son of al-Mustamsik, to the running and many presumed that the elderly caliph would step aside no matter the outcome.¹²⁶⁴ This was because Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī seemed to accept the criticisms of Khalīl, particularly when the jilted cousin was heard to remark to the caliph, "Your eyesight is failing [...] and your authority over the Muslims no longer has legal basis."¹²⁶⁵ The Mamluk sultan also had a vested financial interest in seeing al-Mustamsik deposed: to prevent future difficulties, it was, according to Ibn Iyās, the prerogative of the sultan to banish a deposed caliph, in the case of al-Mustamsik, perhaps to Damietta or Jerusalem.¹²⁶⁶ If the deposed caliph wished to remain near his family, property, and the streams of revenue he had accumulated in Cairo, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had the occasion to extract money in exchange for granting al-Mustamsik permission to reside in the city.¹²⁶⁷

¹²⁶² See Schimmel's discussion of Abbasid appointment and deposition in Cairo: "Kalif und Kadi," 17-20.

¹²⁶³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:139-41. According to Ibn Iyās, the caliph's son Muḥammad was born in 870/1465-6.

¹²⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁶⁵ Ibid., 4:323-4.

¹²⁶⁶ Ibid., 4:141.

¹²⁶⁷ Ibid., 4:139.

Proceedings resumed on 4 Sha‘bān 914/28 November 1508 and al-Mustamsik, joined by his son Muḥammad and cousin Khalīl, reappeared before Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī and the qadis. The humiliating exposure of Khalīl’s speech impediment had damaged his candidacy, though not nearly as much as new documents al-Mustamsik had prepared in the interim, the first of which named his son Muḥammad as his formal heir and *walī al-‘ahd* to the caliphate. The caliph presented the document to the chief Shāfi‘ī qadi Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ṭawīl along with an earlier document attributed to the caliph’s father al-Mutawakkil II which designated al-Mustamsik as his successor followed by “Muḥammad,”¹²⁶⁸ After the qadis ruled on the validity of the documents, al-Mustamsik came forward, formally abdicated the caliphate, and requested Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī to recognize his son. The Mamluk sultan oversaw the first-time succession of an Abbasid son during the lifetime of his father while sharing the same residence.¹²⁶⁹

The amirs accepted the decision and Mamluk authorities confirmed Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb as caliph after an eloquent speech.¹²⁷⁰ The qadis bore witness to the events and al-Mustamsik was retired to his own dwelling in style, surrounded by marks of respect and robed in one of the sultan’s own white linen tunics with sable lining. Khalīl on the other hand, having been denied the caliphate despite an extensive campaign of bribes, received only a tunic as consolation.¹²⁷¹ Muḥammad received the caliphal insignia and became the third Cairene Abbasid to reign as al-Mutawakkil ‘alā ‘l-lāh. Donning his emblems of office, he sat on a throne opposite

¹²⁶⁸ The succession dispute appears to concern the identity of a certain “Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad” named in the investiture deed of al-Mustamsik issued by his father al-Mutawakkil II (no copy of which has survived). Both Khalīl’s father as well as al-Mustamsik’s son shared the name. Schimmel argued that it clearly referred to Muḥammad ibn al-Mustamsik, while Ṭarkhān later suggested that the very purpose of the second council was to ratify a formal break with the earlier document naming al-Mustamsik’s brother (son of al-Mutawakkil II) the second successor in line. See: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 18; Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 68-70. Khalīl pressed his claim based on the idea that he had inherited his father’s birthright. Al-Mustamsik, on the other hand, presented the document to strengthen his delegation of the caliphate to his son Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad. Whether or not the document was authentic, if Muḥammad ibn al-Mustamsik was in his 40s at the time of the dispute, it is entirely likely that he *could* have been legally named as the second heir to the caliphate by his grandfather al-Mutawakkil II. The document which named Ya‘qūb successor also proposed that the caliphate go to his son Muḥammad (the future al-Mutawakkil III) instead of Khalīl which the latter bitterly contested without success, fully expecting that he would succeed his uncle ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in place of his late father. Ibn Iyās (*Badā‘i*, 3:378) provides the details of Khalīl’s outburst upon receiving news of the unfavorable ruling: “[Khalīl] felt despair and the world closing in on him, for he was awaiting the caliphate after his uncle ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and had received no consideration. Seeing power slipping away from him, he lashed out with profanity, urged on by a fire in his heart against Sharaf al-Dīn [Ya‘qūb al-Mustamsik]; but little good came of it. No qadi listened to his charges, and the sultan cared even less.”

¹²⁶⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 4:140-1.

¹²⁷⁰ Ibid. As *kātib al-sirr* it fell to Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Ajā to take the minutes of the session and also draft the official documents. See: Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration*, 41-2.

¹²⁷¹ Ibid. The tunic was similar to the one received by Muḥammad. Khalīl’s son also received two tunics lined with squirrel or sable fur. For more details of these garments, see: Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 14.

the sultan and before the meeting ended, re-affirmed the caliphal authority that al-Mustamsik had carried out eight years earlier.

Those on hand praised Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī for maintaining the caliphate in the same line of the Abbasid family. Khalīl, whose various kickbacks were not returned, left the citadel bitterly disappointed and embarked upon a self-imposed exile to lick his wounds in the holy cities of the Ḥijāz.¹²⁷² Al-Mutawakkil III left the citadel accompanied by the qadis and notables in a solemn street procession to his residence which was lavishly decorated with flags and candles. As for al-Mustamsik, just as Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had eagerly expected, the elderly caliph agreed to pay the 12,000 dinar ransom to remain in Cairo.¹²⁷³

Later Years in Cairo (914-27/1508-21)

Returning to the life of a quasi-elite civilian, Sharaf al-Dīn Ya‘qūb al-Mustamsik was a man in his seventies at the start of his son’s caliphate. In the months immediately following his abdication, the former caliph was confined to his residence. By Dhū al-Ḥijja 917/February 1512, however, after having contributed to the coffers of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, he enjoyed freedom to ride without restraint from his residence to attend Friday prayers and visit the graves of the Qarāfa cemetery.¹²⁷⁴ The Mamluk elite also assigned him a personal assistant (*bardadār*) named Hājī ‘Alī.¹²⁷⁵

Al-Mustamsik faded into the background as his son assumed the monthly visits to the sultan and other ceremonial duties. Perhaps ironically, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī remembered the former caliph some years later in Jumādā I 919/July 1513 after suffering damage to his own eyesight. Thoughtful and empathetic, the sultan reflected on his own lack of sympathy and sent the amir and *na’ib* of the citadel, Ṭuqtubāy, to present the retired Commander of the Faithful with a gift of 500 dinars. Tuqtubāy delivered a special message soliciting the prayers of the ex-caliph and apologizing for the sultan’s past conduct. Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī pleaded with the caliph not to hold

¹²⁷² Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 4:140-1, 360-1. The Ḥijāz was not unfamiliar to Khalīl, who had previously made the pilgrimage in Shawwāl 897/August 1492, during which he spent considerable time engaged in solitary acts of worship as well as communal practices with the noted Shāfi‘ī scholar al-Shihāb al-Qaṣṣālānī (d. 923/1517), to whom he inaccurately boasted that no other member of the Cairo Abbasid family (save for Yahyā ibn al-Musta‘īn) had undertaken the Islamic pilgrimage rite. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:205.

¹²⁷³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 4:141.

¹²⁷⁴ Ibid., 4:252.

¹²⁷⁵ Ibid., 5:389-90. For use in fifteenth century Egypt, Popper translates *bardadār* as a “bailiff” or “usher.” (See: *Systematic Notes*, 1:116). By the early sixteenth century, however, the office appears to have had some secretarial functions in addition to aiding the daily life of the elderly caliph in an unknown capacity.

him in ill regard. Al-Mustamsik sent a reply indicating that he had no reason to bear a grudge for his deposition and that he recalled the sultan with affection.¹²⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the caliph's cousin Khalīl had grown increasingly ill during his sojourn in western Arabia, and sporting a long white beard, returned finally to Cairo as part of a caravan in Muḥarram 920/March 1514. Khalīl died in his seventies on 23 Muḥarram/20 March and despite the upheaval he had inflicted on his family, received a lavish state funeral and interment in the Abbasid mausoleum. Ibn Iyās dismissed Khalīl as frivolous and rash, and wrote that he had left a bad taste in the mouth of the people by embarrassing al-Mustamsik and waging an ugly campaign for the caliphate which by comparison, had made the caliph and his son appear virtuous for weathering the abuse with patience.¹²⁷⁷

By Ramaḍān 922/September-October 1516, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, engulfed in the frenzy that accompanied preparations to do battle with the Ottomans, subjected many to confiscations with the goal of financing the campaign. This, in spite of earlier repentant overtures, extended to al-Mustamsik billāh from whom he confiscated a substantial amount of property.¹²⁷⁸ The sultan claimed that the former caliph was in his debt and provided him with an itemized list of demands. As had been the case with Qāyṭbāy, Mamluk sources interpreted confiscations from the Abbasid caliph as one of the sultan's many grave abuses of power.¹²⁷⁹ As will be discussed below, unforeseen circumstances forced al-Mustamsik to reprise his role as caliph and reenter politics in 922-3/1516-7 after the Mamluk defeat by the Ottomans.

Just as his mother Amīna had been, al-Mustamsik was completely blind by the end of his nearly 80 years. He died on 19 Rabī' II 927/29 March 1521 and was subsequently eulogized by Cairene poets and literati. Qadis and Mamluk officers attended his funeral and observed the caliph's burial the next day in proximity to his Hāshimī parents near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa.¹²⁸⁰ Ibn Iyās described the caliph retrospectively as "simultaneously majestic and humble, a man of deep piety, who since his teens until [his accession to the caliphate] never behaved in a blameworthy or childish fashion."¹²⁸¹

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid., 4:323-4.

¹²⁷⁷ Ibid., 4:360-1. Al-Sakhāwī, who penned a brief biography of Khalīl before the succession debacle, described the Abbasid as a humble and devoted worshipper consumed with good works. See: *Daw'*, 3:205.

¹²⁷⁸ This was mentioned as a grave injustice in Ibn Iyās's treatment of the Sultan. See also: Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 121.

¹²⁷⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:87, 90-1; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 121.

¹²⁸⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:388-9; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:225; Quṭb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 3:184. Ibn Iyās preserved the elegy of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qānṣūh, which I discuss in Chapter 4.

¹²⁸¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:380.

Cairo's Last Abbasid: Al-Mutawakkil III (914-22/1508-17)

In his summary of the year 914/1508-9, Ibn Iyās lauded the abdication of al-Mustamsik in favor of his son al-Mutawakkil III as the most noteworthy event of the year.¹²⁸² Nevertheless, the first years of al-Mutawakkil's caliphate proved uneventful. The new caliph made his debut at the monthly meeting with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Ramaḍān 914/December 1508, crowned with Abbasid headgear wrapped in the "Baghdad style" with its two characteristic flaps of train dangling from the turban.¹²⁸³ The caliph's presence remained ceremonial and al-Mutawakkil tended to avoid the sultan and qadis' monthly discussions of theological or ethical issues.¹²⁸⁴

Some years later in Dhū al-Qa'da 918/January-February 1513, while inspecting recent dyke and canal maintenance on the outskirts of Cairo, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī visited the caliphal estate that had been established at Dahshūr.¹²⁸⁵ The sultan had spent time near the pyramids of Giza, hunting and inspecting fortifications in Fayyūm. Before embarking on the return journey, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī made a final stop to pay respects to the Commander of the Faithful. The sultan honored his host by presenting al-Mutawakkil III with a wool tunic (*silārī*) lined with sable fur worth nearly 300 dinars. Together, sultan and caliph reviewed the ceremonial cavalry units adorned with saddles of gold and bridles with embedded crystal. The caliph presented al-Ghawrī with racing camels, sheep, cattle, numerous geese, chickens, as well as containers of honey, wax, and milk. The sultan's officers also received robes lined with ermine, sable, and Russian squirrel to commemorate the special occasion.¹²⁸⁶

To welcome the sultan back to Cairo after a trip abroad in Sha'bān 919/October 1513, Mamluk officials sought to lavishly decorate the city. Amidst the festivities al-Mutawakkil decorated the door of the Nafīsī shrine and the qadis decorated their own doors.¹²⁸⁷

By the end of the next year, the Mamluks could no longer postpone an impending diplomatic collision with the Ottomans. In Dhū al-Qa'da 920/December 1514 the sultan had been

¹²⁸² Ibid., 4:149. From his position in Damascus, the chronicler Ibn Tūlūn still associated al-Mustamsik with the caliphate as late as 917/1511 (annals from 918 to 920/1512-16 are in some cases missing or incomplete), though he acknowledged the succession of al-Mutawakkil III in 921/1515. See: *Mufaḥḥat al-khillān*, 1:352, 379.

¹²⁸³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:143.

¹²⁸⁴ For example the caliph is neglected in Ibn Iyās's account of the sultan seeking legal counsel from the qadis on the legality of acquiring funds to pay the army. See: *Badā'i*, 4:211-2. Nevertheless, Ibn Iyās seldom fails to mention the meetings at the top of each new month. On one occasion the religious dignitaries even braved torrential rain and hail to deliver New Year's greetings to the sultan. See: *Badā'i*, 4:295-6.

¹²⁸⁵ Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 172. On the history of Dahshūr as property of the Egyptian Abbasid family, see: al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 3:998-9.

¹²⁸⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:290-93; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 172; idem, "Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt," 363.

¹²⁸⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:334. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 110-1.

preoccupied with preparations during his monthly congratulatory session with the caliph and qadis, and briskly dismissed them to resume his plans.¹²⁸⁸ By the end of the month Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had arranged to camp at Raydāniyya. Perplexed and hoping to keep tabs on his movements, the caliph and qadis arrived at the sultan's camp in early Dhū al-Ḥijja 920/January 1515 and found him preparing for a procession through Cairo. Although they had not been expected, and perhaps seeking to win his favor, the five men joined the procession. Al-Mutawakkil III rode to the right of the sultan in his customary black Baghdad turban and a robe spun of white and green wool, while the qadis stayed in the rear.¹²⁸⁹

By late 921/1515, the mounting threat of Ottoman invasion became an imminent reality. In early 922/1516, al-Ghawrī busied himself with examining weapons inventories and other preparations to meet the forces of the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim the Grim (918-26/1512-20).¹²⁹⁰

At the monthly congratulatory session for Ṣafar 922/March 1516, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī ordered al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis to prepare themselves to travel on campaign against the Ottomans, for which the sultan expected them to pay their own way.¹²⁹¹ According to Ibn Iyās, no sultan, since the time of Barsbāy's ill-fated expedition to subdue Aqqyunlu Āmid in 836/1433, had brought the caliph and qadis on campaign beyond Syria without providing their expenses. Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, perhaps oblivious or uninterested in the tradition, made no such provisions much to the dismay of his chief religious functionaries.¹²⁹²

Al-Ghawrī, accused in his own time of greed and financial malfeasance, suffered bad publicity when former officials fled to the Ottoman sultan to complain of his misdeeds.¹²⁹³ The Mamluk sultan had to answer for alleged fiscal oppression including the charge that he had corrupted the judiciary by prohibiting qadis from collecting funds from their deputies to subsidize

¹²⁸⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:413; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 114; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 191. According to Schimmel, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī was angered at the qadis for other reasons and avoided them in order to interrupt their erstwhile duties of officiating marriages and other contracts.

¹²⁸⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:417; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 194.

¹²⁹⁰ Selim's campaign in Egypt and his position towards the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo has received considerable scholarly interest. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 387-412; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 139-68; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 25-7; Holt, "Structure of Government," 45; Faruk Sümer, "Yavuz Selim s'est-il proclamé calife?" *Turcica* 21-23 (1991): 343-54; Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 1973), 33-4.

¹²⁹¹ Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 215.

¹²⁹² Ibn Iyās writes that it had been customary for sultans to foot the bill of hauling caliphal baggage on campaign. See: *Badā'i*, 5:30, 33. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 116-7.

¹²⁹³ Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 121.

their travel expenses. In an apparent attempt at damage control, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī cancelled arbitrary monthly and weekly taxes despite the blow to his coffers.¹²⁹⁴

Although burdened by travel expenses al-Mutawakkil III quickly prepared for the expedition. When word spread that the caliph had been *forced* to pay his own way, members of the Mamluk court reminded the sultan of his customary responsibility to arrange the transport of caliphal baggage on campaign. On 5 Rabīʿ I 922/8 April 1516, the sultan sent his deputy *kātib al-sirr*, the qadi Shihāb al-Dīn al-Jīʿān, to inspect the caliph's luggage. Al-Mutawakkil prepared an estimate that set his overall expenses between 5,000 to 10,000 dinars.¹²⁹⁵

On 25 Rabīʿ I 922/28 April 1516, the caliph, in the hope of receiving financial assistance from the sultan, attended a gathering in which Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī dispersed funds to his *ṭabalkhāna* amirs (amirs of forty with permission to retain an accompanying band) and amirs of ten. Embarrassed by the sultan's lack of consideration and disregard for precedent, al-Mutawakkil III set about the humiliating task of seeking loans from high-level amirs who often expected usurious rates of interest upon return, which the Commander of the Faithful was ultimately unable to pay back.¹²⁹⁶

The issue remained unresolved when tragedy struck the sultan upon the death of his consort, the Circassian slave Jān Sukkar on 19 Rabīʿ I/22 April. Al-Mutawakkil and the qadis ascended the citadel with other state officials to pay respect.¹²⁹⁷ Mamluk authorities approached the caliph to preside over the religious service, oversee funerary prayers at the Sitāra Gate, and lead the procession convoy from the citadel to the sultan's college.¹²⁹⁸ On 28 Rabīʿ I 922/1 May 1516 Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī held a grand evening reception at his *madrasa* complex attended by the caliph and important notables to mourn the one week anniversary of Jān Sukkar's death.¹²⁹⁹ Perhaps softened by the passing of a wife, the sultan relented and on 6 Rabīʿ II 922/9 May 1516

¹²⁹⁴ Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 116; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 215.

¹²⁹⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:23.

¹²⁹⁶ In his chronicle, Ibn Iyās rebukes the sultan as "stingy and unfair" while mentioning that Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī did provide the caliph with new tents and 500 dinars to pay the salaries associated with his household, while each amir had received 500 dinars for himself. See: *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:30; Schimmel, "Some Glimpses," 355.

¹²⁹⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:27-8.

¹²⁹⁸ Ibid. See also: ʿAbd ar-Rāziq, *La femme*, 7. The caliph al-Muʿtaḍid II and the qadis had previously been involved in funerary prayers for Fāṭima bint Quiqār (d. 827/1424), the wife of Barsbāy. See: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍawʿ*, 12:99.

¹²⁹⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5:30-1.

sent al-Mutawakkil 1,000 dinars to defray some of his travel costs.¹³⁰⁰ Some days later, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī sent the caliph an assortment of new tents and a gold-inlayed sword.¹³⁰¹

Mamluk authorities forwarded the caliphal luggage which traveled with great pomp, accompanied by an honor guard and a band of drums and horns as Cairo celebrated the crossing of the battalion on its way through the city to camp at Raydāniyya.¹³⁰² Visiting family members of the Numayyad *sharīf* dynasty that ruled Mecca, participated in the procession along with key members of the sultan's regime, followed by the religious officials and finally the Abbasid caliph in a black tunic of Ba'labakkī cloth with a silk band.¹³⁰³ According to Ibn Iyās, although he wore the distinctive Baghdadī turban, al-Mutawakkil III and Mamluk officials omitted some of the pageantry associated with Abbasid Baghdad which some of the fifteenth century caliphs had again popularized, most notably the conspicuous absence of a special caliphal standard displayed above the caliph as he set out from Cairo with the sultan.¹³⁰⁴

To manage affairs in Cairo during his absence, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī deputized his nephew Ṭūmānbāy to rule as regent. After leaving Cairo, the sultan arrived ten days later on 25 Rabī' II/28 May in Ṣālihiyya and permitted al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis to depart towards Gaza. Rejoining them a week later, the sultan and his chief religious officials enjoyed a sumptuous feast prepared by the governor of Gaza before the sultan, led by caliph and qadis, paraded through the city.¹³⁰⁵

Earlier that month, the Ottoman sultan Selim had sent a confusing message to al-Ghawrī, referring to him as “father” and revealing his intention to kill the Safavid Shāh Ismā'īl based on a fatwa composed by Ottoman religious authorities. Having already dealt the Safavids a crushing defeat at the Battle of Chāldirān in 920/1514, Selim urged the Mamluks to remain neutral.¹³⁰⁶ Suspicious of Ottoman intentions, al-Ghawrī continued to advance his defensive expedition.

After passing Gaza and Damascus, the Mamluk sultan reached Aleppo on 10 Jumādā II/11 July, the caliph and qadis having preceded his entrance. After a celebratory welcome to the city, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī received emissaries from Selim, including the qadi of the Ottoman army

¹³⁰⁰ Ibid., 5:33. The qadis, meanwhile, received nothing to defray their costs.

¹³⁰¹ Ibid. Ibn Iyās estimated that the combined worth of the endowments totaled little more than 2,000 dinars, which fell short of the caliph's minimum expectation of 5,000 dinars to cover baggage, food, transportation and other fees.

¹³⁰² Ibid., 5:37.

¹³⁰³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:40-1; Winter, “Ottoman Occupation,” 496.

¹³⁰⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:41.

¹³⁰⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:51; Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 117.

¹³⁰⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:60. This may well have been a ruse by the Ottoman sultan as rumors of Mamluk complacency towards the Safavids had been interpreted as collusion. See also: Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 222-3.

and a high-ranking officer.¹³⁰⁷ These ambassadors claimed that the Ottoman sultan was at Caesarea preparing to confront the Safavids, and presented the Mamluk sultan and the Abbasid caliph with lavish tokens of Ottoman esteem.¹³⁰⁸ Al-Ghawrī likewise sent Selim gifts, and plans for peace seemed to be in the offing.¹³⁰⁹ However, the Ottoman sultan was convinced of Mamluk-Safavid collusion and, although the Mamluk sultan sent an emissary to Selim's camp, reassuring him of his neutrality, the messenger suffered severe abuse and returned with Selim's message: "Meet me at Marj Dābiq!"¹³¹⁰

By Rajab 922/August 1516 the bulk of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's forces had arrived in Aleppo. Before the battle, both the Ottomans and the Mamluks demonstrated a keenness to cast their respective causes as a struggle for the faith. Both sides used banners decorated with religious slogans. Selim secured fatwas from his 'ulamā' denouncing Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī as a Safavid proxy who could legally be attacked as the ally of an infidel, while Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, who had sworn many of his amirs to fidelity over the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān, engaged in special prayers led by al-Mutawakkil III in the sultan's tent in the center of the Hippodrome of Aleppo (*al-maydān*) in hopes that the caliph's favor might secure divine victory for the Egyptian army. Before the battle in Aleppo, the Mamluk sultan gathered all of his religious personnel and spiritual guides. Among other demonstrations of his piety and munificence, the sultan paid the caliph 400 dinars and gave him 100 sheep. As he rode into battle, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī positioned the caliph at his right, with a flag above his head along with 40 *sharīfs* with Qur'āns (including the sultan's precious tome of 'Uthmān) encased in yellow silk.¹³¹¹

As Selim led the Ottoman advance, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī ordered his own army to deploy at Ḥaylān, outside Aleppo, to meet the Ottomans on 17 Rajab/16 August. Al-Mutawakkil III wrote

¹³⁰⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:60; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:282-5. For a description of the procession in Damascus, in which the caliph and qadis preceded Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, see: Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufaḥḥat al-khillān*, 2:13-4.

¹³⁰⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:61; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 118. The sultan received, among other things, forty mamlūks in sable jackets, velvet cloth, wool, and Ba'labakkī fabric while the caliph received two sable jackets, a velvet costume with gold-stitched hems, and two fine wool suits. The qadi of the Ottoman army also gave the caliph two serge suits, a prayer carpet and a mule. According to Behrens-Abouseif, "the presents to the caliphs and other dignitaries may have been meant to pave the way for [Selim to take] control of the Mamluk state with its apparatus and the transfer of the Abbasid caliph to Istanbul." See: *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate*, 92.

¹³⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹³¹⁰ Winter, "Ottoman Occupation," 497.

¹³¹¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:63. See also: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 392; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 139-40; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 118-9; Inalcik, *Ottoman Empire*, 14; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 224-5; Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 109-12. Special prayers were also offered for the sultan at the Umayyad mosque. See: Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:285-6.

news of the impending battle to his father al-Mustamsik in a letter that also discussed dire economic conditions such as the rising prices for foodstuff and animal fodder in Aleppo.¹³¹²

The Battle of Marj Dābiq

The Ottomans and Mamluks faced off near the tomb of King David north of Aleppo on the plains of Marj Dābiq. Beginning early on 25 Rajab 922/24 August 1516, the battle proved a swift, decisive Ottoman victory due, in large part, to their military superiority, and mastery of firearm technology.¹³¹³ The Ottomans were also aided by the last-minute defection of key Mamluk units, notably those of Khāyrbak, the *nā'ib* of Aleppo, at a critical moment.¹³¹⁴ Al-Ghawrī collapsed in battle, most likely the victim of an epileptic fit. Al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis were quickly collected among Selim's high profile prisoners.¹³¹⁵

While the majority of Mamluk survivors fled to Damascus, the Abbasid caliph, seemingly conscious of his own value, lingered in Ḥaylān, perhaps, in part, to curry an advantageous reception from the victor as he entered Aleppo.¹³¹⁶ Despite a report that the caliph, likely filthy from traveling through dusty battlefields, entered the sultan's presence (with three of the four chief qadis) in a shabby state (*hum fī ḥāl riththa*), the Ottoman sultan still rose to greet al-Mutawakkil when he entered Selim's chamber.¹³¹⁷ Anxious to portray himself as a loyal servant of the caliphate (akin to any new Mamluk sultan), Selim bade the caliph sit, and pledged to restore all customary rights to the office. Selim inquired about al-Mutawakkil's place of origin, promising to return the caliph to his ancestral seat of Baghdad, a place no Cairo-born Abbasid

¹³¹² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:64-5. For some idea of food prices in Cairo between 784-903/1382-1497, see: Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 2:80-106.

¹³¹³ Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 394-6; David Ayalon, *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Kingdom: A Challenge to a Mediaeval Society* (London, 1956); Robert Irwin, "Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamluk Sultanate Reconsidered" in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 117-39.

¹³¹⁴ Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 108. On the military legacy of the battle, see: Irwin, "Gunpowder and Firearms," 131-7.

¹³¹⁵ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:286-7. Little is known as to how the caliph and qadis came into Ottoman custody. Arabic sources say very little, and Turkish sources do not even use the word "caliph" according to Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 349.

¹³¹⁶ Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:288; Muir, *Caliphate*, 589. Although he had not taken part in the fighting, the Abbasid caliph had been called to the battlefield to administer *bay'a* pledges and safeguard the fidelity of the Mamluk fighters. See: Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte: historiens et conquérants au XVIe siècle* (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), 5.

¹³¹⁷ Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-khillān*, 2:32. The Ḥanaḥī qadi Maḥmūd ibn al-Shihna had decided against surrendering and fled with the retreating Mamluks. At the meeting Selim chastised the qadis over reports of judiciary abuse and for their alleged enabling of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's trespasses against religious law. All three were upbraided and placed under surveillance.

had ever set foot in.¹³¹⁸ When al-Mutawakkil expressed his desire to leave, the Ottoman sultan robed him in a silk, Turkish-style caftan tunic (*dolama*), presented him with an immense cash gift, and authorized the caliph's return to Aleppo under Ottoman escort both to monitor and frustrate any possibility of escape.¹³¹⁹

Shortly after his reception with the caliph and qadis in Ḥaylān,¹³²⁰ Selim set up camp in the hippodrome of Aleppo and seized the treasury, weapons, and provisions abandoned in the citadel by the fleeing Mamluks. Modern scholars debate whether al-Mutawakkil and the qadis offered *bay'a* to Selim as the new sultan in the former Mamluk lands.¹³²¹

When al-Ghawrī failed to return from the battlefield and authorities could recover no body, mosque orators throughout Egypt and Syria were left with the delicate but weighted question of *who* to pray for in the Friday *khuṭba*. Some preachers refrained from naming any sultan and instead only mentioned al-Mutawakkil while others prayed for God's deliverance.¹³²² In the great mosque of Aleppo, however, the congregation prayed for Selim "the just *imām*" (*al-imām al-'ādil*) and "sultan of the two noble sanctuaries [of Mecca and Medina]" (*sulṭān al-ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*), an Ayyubid era title also exploited by the Mamluks.¹³²³

Al-Mustamsik Returns to Office

¹³¹⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:74. This was indeed an intriguing prospect: while Baghdad had been the ancestral home of the Abbasids, only the first two Cairo caliphs had ever seen the city. As a lifelong resident of Cairo with no ties to Baghdad, al-Mutawakkil III could hardly have been enthusiastic about "returning" to a city, which, in the early sixteenth century, was an unimportant backwater in the hands of competing Turkmen factions. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 369, 397; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 140; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 119. At the time, Baghdad was the object of competition between the Ottomans and Safavids.

¹³¹⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:74, 77. Ottoman authorities prohibited the caliph and three qadis from leaving Aleppo. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 25; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 348 note 17; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 229.

¹³²⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:74.

¹³²¹ Faruk Sümer ("Yavuz Selim," 344) argues that a *rûznâme* of the Ottoman bureaucrat Haydar Çelebi (preserved by Feridun Bey) written after Marj Dābiq makes no such claim and that Selim would not have bothered to ask the Cairo *'ulamā'* if he needed the caliph's permission (*icâzet* or *ijāza*) to take the sultanate. Benjamin Lellouch, on the other hand, suggests that religious officials including the caliph offered *bay'a* to the Ottoman sultan. See: *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 9.

¹³²² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:81.

¹³²³ On prayers for Selim in Damascus, see: Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 1:290-1. Modern scholars conclude that control of the Ḥijāz was a greater ideological prize for the Ottomans than capturing the Abbasid caliph. Indeed Selim wrote to his son Sulaymān about this particular glory and failed to mention the caliph at all. Mosque orators prayed for the Ottoman sultan in all the new Arab lands he conquered after Marj Dābiq. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 402-6; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 140, 144-8; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 82; Halil Inalcik, "Selīm I," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 9:130; idem, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 1973), 33-4; P. M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, 1516-1922: A Political History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 42; Gilles Veinstein, "Les Serviteurs des deux saints sanctuaires et ses *mahmal*. Des Mamelouks aux Ottomans," *Turcica* 41 (2009): 229-46; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 9.

Mamluk amirs in Cairo coaxed Ṭūmānbāy, the *nā'ib* of Egypt, to assume the sultanate and continue the resistance. Considering al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis' detention in the Ottoman camp, ceremonial demanded a surrogate Abbasid to carry out traditional functions associated with Mamluk sultanate investiture. There was initial speculation that one of the sons of Khalīl would serve due to al-Mustamsik's formal abdication in 914/1508, but in Ramaḍān 922/October 1516 the amirs brought the former caliph out of retirement as his son's representative. Al-Mustamsik approached the Gate of the Chain with family members including his grandson Hārūn ibn al-Mutawakkil and some of the sons of his rival Khalīl. Few religious officials had remained in Cairo to attend the ceremony. After the formalities, the court accepted a document al-Mustamsik had produced granting him legal ability to act in the absence of his son.¹³²⁴ Since al-Mustamsik had already been ceremoniously removed from office, perhaps there was less fear that he might be unwilling to hand over the office in the event that his son returned.

The council of surviving Mamluk amirs and '*ulamā*' ratified al-Mustamsik's *bay'a* and delegation of powers to Ṭūmānbāy as a deputy (*niyāba*) acting on behalf of al-Mutawakkil III. The deputy qadis, themselves filling in for the chief qadis in Selim's custody, prepared an investiture deed testifying to Ṭūmānbāy's delegation by the presiding Abbasid caliph. Few resources remained in Cairo to perform a lavish ceremony or parade. Thus Ṭūmānbāy rode out in a black turban and dress after his investiture, on a parade horse without a gilded saddle or parasol. Preceded by al-Mustamsik, the sultan ascended the Ḥarrāqa Pavilion near the Gate of the Chain and entered the grand palace to sit upon the throne. The amirs paid homage and news of the succession spread through Cairo. After the ceremony, Mamluk grandees robed al-Mustamsik and solemnly returned him to the Abbasid residence.¹³²⁵ Later that month, the caliph attended the ceremonial reading of Ṭūmānbāy's investiture deed, along with the deputy qadis and amirs commanding one thousand. As a commemorative gift, al-Mustamsik received some partial *iqṭā'*s including more land adjoining Dahshūr.¹³²⁶

A two-month period of sustained diplomatic correspondence ensued between Selim, now garrisoned in Damascus, and the fledgling government of Ṭūmānbāy, as the Ottoman sultan planned his next move and wrestled with the prospect of invading Cairo or returning to Istanbul. In a letter to the citadel sent in 922/1516, Selim forwarded a mixture of claims and threats to Ṭūmānbāy's entourage in Cairo:

¹³²⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:104. As Barthold observed, it is noteworthy that two caliphs, a father and son, were used to simultaneously legitimize the authority of two hostile rulers. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 397-8; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 120.

¹³²⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:104-5.

¹³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5:110.

God revealed to me that I would possess the universe, I would be the master of all the regions of the earth, east to west, as they were once possessions of Alexander Dhū al-Qarnayn [...] You [i.e., Ṭūmānbāy] are a slave to be sold and bought, power does not suit you, whilst I am a *khān* -- the son of a *khān* for twenty generations. I hold power by 'ahd from the caliph and the qadis of the religious law. These territories are mine thanks to my sword and by the death of al-Ghawrī. For this reason it is to me that you send the tax (*kharāj*) that was previously sent to the caliphs of Baghdad. I am the caliph of God on earth and my rank is above yours in the service of the two Sacred Cities (*ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*). If you wish to preserve your power which cannot resist us, strike your coins in our name, pronounce the *khutba* on our behalf and govern the territory from Gaza to Egypt as our governor (*wālī*). If you disobey me, I will come to Egypt and I will not spare the life of your companions or your soldiers.¹³²⁷

If the text of this letter is authentic, it presents a rare opportunity to examine Selim's understanding of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo. A key unvoiced Arabic phrase (English underlined above) has afforded scholars some room to interpret the words attributed to the Ottoman sultan: *tawallaytu al-mulk bi-'ahd min al-khalīfa wa-min quḍāt al-shar'*. Among the translators of this letter, Barthold, Schimmel, and Gaston Wiet understood Selim to be claiming investiture by the Abbasid caliph and qadis in accordance with the norms of Mamluk ceremonial.¹³²⁸ Faruk Sümer, on the other hand, read the Arabic instead as *tawallaytu al-mulk bi-'ahd min al-khalīfa*, and stated that the Ottoman sultan, far from lowering himself to any such appeal to Mamluk tradition, was merely *criticizing* Ṭūmānbāy for seeking authority from the caliph.¹³²⁹

Preparing to make his last stand against the Ottomans, Ṭūmānbāy, reportedly distressed by the letter, began negotiating with Selim from his base at al-Bahnasā in Middle Egypt, seeking the intercession of al-Mutawakkil and proclaiming his interest in ruling as an Ottoman vassal.¹³³⁰ Perhaps in need of impartial representatives, the parties tapped al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis to mediate between them. Like his recent predecessors, the caliph had no real negotiating power and was merely a messenger relaying official positions.¹³³¹ Initially unopposed to the idea of

¹³²⁷ Ibid., 5:124-5.

¹³²⁸ See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 397; Gaston Wiet, *Journal d'un Bourgeois du Caire; chronique d'Ibn Iyās*, 2:117; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 25-6. In another translation of the passage, W. H. Salmon interprets Selim's statement as follows: "I [...] have taken possession of the country by agreement with the Khalīfah and the judges." See: *An Account of the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in the Year A.H. 922 (A.D.1516): Translated from the Third Volume of the Arabic Chronicle of Muḥammed Ibn Aḥmed Ibn Iyās, An Eye-Witness of the Scenes He Describes* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1921), 91. At present I am preparing an article re-evaluating the relationship of Selim and al-Mutawakkil III in the immediate aftermath of Marj Dābiq.

¹³²⁹ Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 349.

¹³³⁰ Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 121; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 39-40.

¹³³¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:147-58; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 141.

recognizing Ṭūmānbāy as governor, Selim seemed anxious to make peace and dispatched the caliph and qadis to negotiate a settlement. The Ottoman sultan used the caliph and qadis to deliver an affirmative response to the former Mamluk sultan. Both sides appeared interested in a Cairo-based government with Ṭūmānbāy at the helm, so long as he paid proper respect to the Ottoman sultan on his coinage and in the weekly *khutba*.¹³³² After perhaps having grown weary of ongoing dialogues, al-Mutawakkil sent his *dawādār* secretary Bardbak (or Birdī Beg) with the qadis in his place to relay messages.¹³³³ It all came to naught, however, when hawkish Mamluk amirs torpedoed Ṭūmānbāy's overtures for peace and belligerently forced Selim's ambassadors to flee. Angered by the insult, Selim promptly executed a number of high Mamluk officers in his captivity and prepared to overpower Egypt.¹³³⁴

After an hour of battle, the Ottomans overwhelmed the Mamluks at Raydāniyya on the first day of 923/23 January 1517.¹³³⁵ Ṭūmānbāy attempted a short-lived guerilla resistance, but a final showdown with the Ottomans at Giza secured Ottoman control over Mamluk territory although Ṭūmānbāy and the remainder of his forces remained at large for several months. The day after the battle at Raydāniyya, mosque orators in Cairo, making no mention of the Abbasid caliph, proclaimed: "Oh God, grant victory to the sultan, son of the sultan, the king of the two continents and the two seas, the destroyer of the two armies, the sultan of the two 'Irāqs, the servant of the two holy sanctuaries, the victorious king, sultan Selim Shāh."¹³³⁶

Caliph of Ottoman Cairo

Some days before the Battle of Raydāniyya, al-Mutawakkil III moved to enter Cairo with Selim and his officers and grandees. The caliph was able to trade on the goodwill he had established with the Ottoman sultan to curb plundering of the city as well as to spare members of the Mamluk elite from summary execution. As ambassador to the Ottomans and as "the last political representative of independent Egypt,"¹³³⁷ the Abbasid caliph made himself valuable as an intermediary between the previous order and the new regime. Heralds ushered the caliph through the city with torches, charged with preparing Cairo for Selim's entry and to declare a

¹³³² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:125, 169-70; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 17. The *rūznāme* of Ḥaydar Çelebi contains further details on the failure of the negotiations. See: Ferīdūn Beg, *Münşe'ātü s-selāṭīn*, 1:487.

¹³³³ Arnold, *Caliphate*, 141; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 121-2; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 39.

¹³³⁴ Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 39.

¹³³⁵ Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 110.

¹³³⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:147-8; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 140; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 26-7; Inalcik, "Appendix: The Ottomans and the Caliphate," 1:321; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 349.

¹³³⁷ Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 14.

general amnesty.¹³³⁸ The caliph's words emphasized general security, the notion that trade should resume unhindered, and that the sultan's troops must not molest the population. Nevertheless, Ottoman troops ignored the caliph's calls for restraint and ravaged Cairo for three days, often ransacking houses under the pretext of hunting fugitive Mamluk officers. On 3 Muḥarram 923/26 January 1517, al-Mutawakkil III and the qadis solemnly led Selim through the streets of Cairo from the *Bāb al-Naṣr* entrance gate.¹³³⁹

Selim, perhaps needing to make use of the reputation of the caliph, indulged al-Mutawakkil III as an administrator as no Mamluk sultan had ever done. Ibn Iyās claimed the caliph enjoyed "unlimited power" and revealingly described him as chief disposer of affairs (*al-ṣāhib al-ḥāl wa-al-'aqd*) in early Ottoman Cairo. The home of the caliph in the city became a hub for dispossessed members of the elite and "the sons of former Mamluk sultans, amirs, and notables sat about like docile fixtures -- the populace having forgotten who they were."¹³⁴⁰ In a clear reversal of fortune, many notables of the previous regime, we are told, wandered aimlessly in the caliph's corridors or sat idly in his parlor.

According to Ibn Iyās, Egypt felt the influence of al-Mutawakkil III for several months as he executed local tasks at his own discretion. The caliph's duties in Cairo primarily involved intercession for members of the population who had become the recipients of unwanted Ottoman attention. As if seeking protection, some Cairene households displayed caliphal colors on their doors. Petitioners flocked to the caliph's residence in search of intervention with the new regime and in exchange bestowed lavish gifts the like of which earlier caliphs in Cairo had never seen. Such rapid wealth accumulation piqued Selim's interest, and he demanded a share for the Ottoman treasury, although al-Mutawakkil III successfully persuaded the Ottoman sultan to content himself with a small amount.¹³⁴¹

The Commander of the Faithful also received tribute and bribes in the form of the many women and slave-girls brought to his abode, "strewn so numerously about the house that the caliph barely took notice of them. Even princesses who had been married to Ṭūmānbāy sat around

¹³³⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:147. See also: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 398. According to Ibn Ṭūlūn, al-Mutawakkil and the qadis entered Egypt in Ramaḍān 922. See: *Mufākahat al-khillān*, 2:32.

¹³³⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:147-8, 150. See also: Ayalon, "Mamlūk Military Aristocracy," 413-6; Winter, "Ottoman Occupation," 503.

¹³⁴⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:157-8; Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 398. These notables included the sons of former sultans such as Khushqadam and al-Manṣūr 'Uthmān as well as other amirs and officers.

¹³⁴¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:158. It is indeed problematic that contemporary Ottoman sources apparently make little mention of al-Mutawakkil III at this important time. The lack of reference has led some researchers to question whether Ibn Iyās greatly exaggerated the caliph's influence during the period. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 396; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 349-50.

his house like slave women.”¹³⁴² One such “princess,” the daughter of the prominent *dawādār* Āqbirdī, had taken refuge with the caliph after the Ottomans executed Ṭūmānbāy and left her with a heavy fine. Taking pity on the young woman or perhaps sensing an opportunity, al-Mutawakkil III regularly petitioned Selim on her behalf until he achieved a substantial reduction. In return for his chivalry, many women of the former Mamluk court offered him fancy gifts, resulting in what Ibn Iyās interpreted as a corrosive atmosphere that clouded the caliph’s judgment, contributed to his vainglorious sense of self-importance, and ultimately led to his political unraveling.¹³⁴³

Thanks largely to authority invigorated by the Ottoman sultan, the Abbasid caliph served Cairo as an arbitrator with the power to provide tentative rulings to the populace, which, however, could later be appealed after review by Ottoman authorities. Naturally the caliph’s rulings failed to please every plaintiff. In the days of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, a disgraced deputy qadi convicted of adultery, Nūr al-Dīn al-Mashālī along with his mistress, and al-Zankalūnī, a colleague who had come to their defense, were stoned and hanged on the sultan’s orders.¹³⁴⁴ The families of both men harbored lasting grievances against the qadi Shams al-Dīn ibn Wuhaysh whom they blamed for wrongfully inciting the Mamluk sultan against their fathers. When the Ottomans took power in Cairo, a proclamation encouraged such injured parties to seek the new regime’s justice. The Ottomans appointed al-Mutawakkil III as arbiter in the case of the two families against Ibn Wuhaysh. The caliph, perhaps sympathetic or wary of the religious establishment, ruled that the qadi should not die but pay instead blood money of 300 dinars to the family of al-Zankalūnī and 200 to the family of al-Mashālī. Both sides, unsatisfied by the caliph’s ruling, dismissed it in favor of a direct referral to the Ottoman sultan in Muḥarram 923/January-February 1517.¹³⁴⁵

According to an Ottoman administrative log book (*rūznāme*) attributed to the administrator Ḥaydar Çelebi, rare among contemporary Ottoman sources for its mention of the caliph of Cairo, al-Mutawakkil played a minor role in settling affairs with Ṭūmānbāy who had been confined to Upper Egypt in the weeks after Raydāniyya.¹³⁴⁶ Wishing to court another offer

¹³⁴² Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 5:158.

¹³⁴³ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 4: 344-47, 355; 5:158; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 2:252. This case has received some attention in recent scholarship, see: Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 149-51; idem, “Royal Justice in Mamluk Cairo: Contrasting Motives of Two Sultans,” *Saber religioso y poder politico en el Islam: Actas des simposio internacional* (Granada, 15-18 Octubre, 1991) (Madrid, 1994), 197-212; idem, *Criminal Underworld*, 140-1; Yossef Rapoport, “Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 1-3.

¹³⁴⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 5:158. On blood money in this period, see: Petry, *Criminal Underworld*, 207-11.

¹³⁴⁶ Ferīdūn Beg, *Münşe’ātü s-selāṭīn*, 1:487; Sümer, “Yavuz Selim,” 350 note 27. It is strange that Ottoman sources mention so little of al-Mutawakkil III. Barthold suggested that the Ottomans may have

from Selim, Ṭūmānbāy wrote of his interest in accepting the initial offer to govern Egypt.¹³⁴⁷ He sent a messenger to Selim's headquarters on 10 Šafar 923/4 March 1517 asking for a trustworthy man to conduct negotiations:

One of the qadis returned from [initial negotiations with] Ṭūmānbāy and asked for safe passage and a trustworthy man [from the Ottoman side]. On [11 Šafar 923/5 March 1517] the pashas gathered in their council (*dīvān*) to arrange for embassies to and from Ṭūmānbāy. Even the caliph and qadis of the four schools went to the sovereign [Selim] to speak, [after which, the Ottoman sultan] granted them authorizations of safe conduct (*amān*) [to engage in negotiations with Ṭūmānbāy's camp unmolested]. [On 12 Šafar/6 March] the Abbasid caliph al-Mutwakkil [...] the last representative of the Abbasid dynasty in Egypt, along with his men and the four qadis, met with Muṣṭafā Çelebi, the former finance minister (*defterdar*) of Anatolia, who had been appointed ambassador,¹³⁴⁸ as well as Ṭūmānbāy's appointee qadi Abū al-Salām. After coming together and taking their seats, a royal order (*ḥukm-i sharīf*) was composed and letters were sent on behalf of Khayrbak and the caliph.¹³⁴⁹

In the days that followed, the delegation of Muṣṭafā Çelebi, including the four qadis and the caliph's secretary Bardbak, set out to meet Ṭūmānbāy and swear him to the conditions of Selim. The ambassadors were ambushed, however, resulting in the murders of Muṣṭafā Çelebi and the Ḥanafī qadi, though the others escaped. Ṭūmānbāy was eventually captured and executed; the Ottomans hung him from the *Bāb Zuwayla* gate as a common brigand on 21 Rabī' I 923/13 April 1517.¹³⁵⁰

Sürgün to Istanbul

We can not know Selim's long-term intentions for al-Mutawakkil III, but after about two months the sultan included the caliph in a forced exile (*sürgün*) of Egyptian citizens (mostly aristocrats and former members of the Mamluk elite) to the Ottoman capital after the ex-Mamluk general Khāyrbak, rewarded for his betrayal and defection at Marj Dābiq, took power formally as

wished to conceal the Abbasid caliph among their own supporters as it is difficult to believe that Ottoman participants in Marj Dābiq would have been unaware of the caliph's presence. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 396.

¹³⁴⁷ Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 34. In organizing post-conquest Egypt, it seems unlikely that Selim, having already named Khāyrbak the master of Egypt, would have been interested in including Ṭūmānbāy, even though the Abbasid caliph and the qadis had participated in the negotiations.

¹³⁴⁸ Ibn Iyās names the Ottoman ambassador Muṣliḥ al-Dīn (*Badā'i*, 5:164); Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 350.

¹³⁴⁹ The text of the *rūznāme* is found in Ferīdūn Beg, *Münşe'atü s-selāṭīn*, 1:487 also quoted in Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 350 note 27. I wish to thank Victor Ostapchuk and Lale Javanshir for their assistance in translating this passage. See also: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 121-2.

¹³⁵⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:166-8; Ferīdūn Beg, *Münşe'atü s-selāṭīn*, 1:487; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 350; Winter, "Ottoman Occupation," 500-4.

the new governor of Egypt.¹³⁵¹ In late Rabīʿ II 923/May 1517 al-Mutawakkil III, on Selim's orders, prepared his luggage for Istanbul. The exile of the caliph was part of an extraction that often included artisans, and notables, as well as potential troublemakers. Select Abbasid family members were chosen to accompany al-Mutawakkil including his second cousins Aḥmad and Abū Bakr, the sons of Khalīl. The caliph's son-in-law Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Khāṣṣbak was also chosen for the voyage.¹³⁵² Ibn Iyās informs us that the Ottoman sultan's decision was unpopular and Cairenes bitterly resented the removal of the caliph from Egypt under such harsh circumstances and little regard for his person.¹³⁵³ At this time, the Ottomans also relieved the Abbasid family of stewardship of the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa. The loss of income had presented the caliph's father al-Mustamsik with a great financial burden, dependent as he was on the shrine's collected revenue, and he protested through the appropriate channels without success.¹³⁵⁴ No doubt adding to the injury, the Ottomans also appear to have removed valuable heirloom swords (including the alleged blade of the last Baghdad caliph al-Mustaʿsim) from the private treasury of al-Mustamsik.¹³⁵⁵ Combined with the caliph's part in the failure to broker a peace with Ṭūmānbāy, the confiscation of family heirlooms and Nafīsī shrine revenues widened the growing cleft between Selim and the Abbasid caliphate.¹³⁵⁶

After completing his preparations, the caliph left his residence for Istanbul on 12 Jumāda I 923/2 June 1517. Joined by his kinsmen, he boarded a boat on the bank of Būlāq, a Nile port just beyond the walls of the old city.¹³⁵⁷ After a week's confinement, al-Mutawakkil's party

¹³⁵¹ Qutb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 3:184. The *sürgüns* were said to be difficult on those affected: if they survived the journey, many spent long lonely lives in Istanbul away from their families and places of birth. See: Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman rule, 1517-1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 10; Rhoads Murphey, "Sürgün" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 2004), Supplement, 767. Selim may have decided to send off a large number of notables "to break the resistance of the civil establishment in the new provinces." See: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 28-9.

¹³⁵² Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:183-5, 229. See also: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 398.

¹³⁵³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:185, 352; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 350-1; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 17.

¹³⁵⁴ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:192; Rāgib, "Sayyida Nafisa," 43. Scholars have pointed out the peculiarity that Selim's attitude towards the Abbasid caliphate should change so abruptly, that the caliph be sent to Istanbul and that his father be deprived of shrine income. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 398. It may just have been that the Ottoman sultan saw the caliph as too valuable to leave behind in Cairo to fall into the hands of the next upstart or rebel. As for the shrine, Mamluk sultans like Barqūq, Qaytbay, and al-Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had also stripped the family of assets as they saw fit. The shrine revenue had been reassigned at least twice by the Mamluks while it was in Abbasid hands. It is not surprising that the Ottomans seized its assets and used them to pay off or reward another functionary or party they deemed more deserving at the time.

¹³⁵⁵ David Alexander, "Swords from Ottoman and Mamluk Treasuries," *Artibus Asiae* 66, No. 2 (2006): 14-29.

¹³⁵⁶ Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 19; Tetsuya, "Cairene Cemeteries," 102.

¹³⁵⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:430-5.

followed the river to Rosetta (al-Rashīd) and Alexandria. This allowed Selim to join the exiles after he completed his affairs in Cairo.¹³⁵⁸

Before his departure from Cairo on 26 Sha'bān 923/13 September 1517, Selim ordered another 800 souls shipped to Istanbul.¹³⁵⁹ The earlier deportees remained sequestered prisoners in caravansaries and fortified towers in Jumāda I 923/May-June 1517 with the plan that all exiles would leave at once with the sultan's permission. Ibn Iyās describes quite abysmal conditions for the *sürgün* exiles. Things worsened in Alexandria due to a water shortage brought in part by the influx of Ottoman troops to the city. News reached Cairo in Ramaḍān 924/September 1518 that as many as eighty deportees had died though the Abbasids were not among them.¹³⁶⁰

Selim returned leisurely to his capital in Ramaḍān 923/September 1517 through Syria and southwestern Anatolia, his prisoners having arrived in Istanbul some time before him. Details on prisoner conditions are sparse, though we might assume that al-Mutawakkil III and other high-ranking Mamluk prisoners might have enjoyed *some* degree of respect as hostages of distinction. Once he learned of Selim's imminent arrival, al-Mutawakkil, who had access to a horse, rode to greet the sultan with his family members and other important exiles, all anxious to learn their fate. The caliph moved to dismount from his horse in the presence of Selim, but the Ottoman sultan bade him remain saddled and lavished special marks of honor on him. The sultan ignored the other Egyptian notables that had come to welcome him. Ibn Iyās reckoned the mood was thick with anticipation for their future to be decided in hopes of return to Cairo. Heedless, Selim immediately embarked on procession through Istanbul and sojourned for a week before moving on to inspect Edirne (Adrianople). The Ottoman sultan was far more worried about the plague and food shortages threatening his army and capital than the lives of has-beens from a vanquished regime.¹³⁶¹

The Fabled "Transfer of the Caliphate" in Istanbul

Although the sources contain no evidence, a legend developed in later times which claimed that al-Mutawakkil III formally transferred his office and all his rights to the Ottoman

¹³⁵⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:184; Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 398.

¹³⁵⁹ Inalcik, "Selīm I."

¹³⁶⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:185, 272.

¹³⁶¹ Ibid. Sümer has raised doubts on the veracity of this, however, as Ferīdūn Beg records a report that the Ottoman sultan returned to Istanbul at night by boat on 17 Rajab 924/25 July 1518. See: *Münşe'ātü s-selāṭīn*, 1:458; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 351; Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 399.

Dynasty. The lack of material evidence, however, did not hamper later political propagandists in the Ottoman Empire from developing imaginative narratives.¹³⁶²

The earliest versions of the story to appear in western sources include the works of Georg Fabricius and Johannes Rosinus. In the late seventeenth century they claimed that Selim forced al-Mutawakkil III to abdicate, yet they do not say that the sultan made any claim to the office for himself.¹³⁶³ According to Bernard Lewis, the most widely referenced story, that al-Mutawakkil III transferred his title to Selim, appeared in 1788 in Mouradgea D'Ohsson's *Tableau général de l'Empire ottoman* which collected popular versions of the story circulating at the end of the eighteenth century. D'Ohsson's work won wide acceptance and was quoted and cited in later historical accounts without further question.¹³⁶⁴

Tales about the Abbasid to Ottoman "transfer of authority" grew more elaborate in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and often varied. Some said the title was officially given to Selim in a solemn ceremony at the Aya Sofia. Others claimed the Ottoman sultan was announced as caliph at the first Friday sermon following the conquest of Aleppo. A few more asserted that it all happened at the mosque of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh in Cairo.¹³⁶⁵ Often, al-Mutawakkil III was depicted surrendering his regalia as well: the mantle of the Prophet, several hairs from his beard, and the sword of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.¹³⁶⁶ One modern historian notes that such accounts tended to use florid and contrived dialogue while lacking sources for their claims.¹³⁶⁷ It was only in the twentieth century when scholars such as Barthold (being credited with having been first to expose the story as completely without foundation in the historical sources), Arnold, and George Stripling suggested that the idea needed re-examination.¹³⁶⁸

¹³⁶² Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 401-2. This claim and the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo are discussed in: J. W. Redhouse, *A Vindication of the Ottoman Sultan's Title of "Caliph"; Shewing its Antiquity, Validity, and Universal Acceptance* (London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1877), 6, 10-11; Inalcik, "Appendix: The Ottomans and the Caliphate," 1:320.

¹³⁶³ N. A. Asrar, "The Myth about the Transfer of the Caliphate to the Ottomans," *Journal of the Regional Cultural Institute* 5, no. 2-3 (1972): 116.

¹³⁶⁴ Bernard Lewis, "'Abbāsids," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:21. See also: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 146-7.

¹³⁶⁵ Asrar, "Myth about the Transfer," 111.

¹³⁶⁶ Dominique Sourdel confirms the validity of the transfer of these items to the Ottoman capital at some point, though Asrar maintains that it was the *sharīf* of Mecca, and not the caliph al-Mutawakkil III as claimed in the fabricated accounts, who gifted them to Selim along with the keys to the Holy Cities. This seems the most likely scenario considering the relics are not mentioned in most Mamluk ceremonial accounts involving the contemporary Abbasid caliphs. See: "Khalīfa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:937-47; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 142; Asrar, "Myth about the Transfer," 114.

¹³⁶⁷ Asrar, "Myth about the Transfer," 112.

¹³⁶⁸ See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 401-2; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 146-7; George Stripling, *The Ottoman Turks and the Arabs, 1511-1574* (University of Illinois Press, 1942).

In later years, Halil Inalcik pointed out that the Arabic Mamluk sources of the time frequently identify al-Mutawakkil III as *al-khalīfa* or *amīr al-mu'minīn*, while Selim is merely *malik al-Rūm*.¹³⁶⁹ Legends about the transfer became current when the Ottomans felt the need to respond to Russian aspirations to “protect” Ottoman Christians with a counter-claim of Ottoman spiritual authority over Muslims newly integrated into Russia after the conquest of the Crimea in the eighteenth century.¹³⁷⁰ Such authority was largely based on the myth that the last Abbasid caliph had relinquished authority to the Ottoman dynasty.

To supplement the lack of evidence about a transfer, some scholars have drawn attention to the Ottomans’ complete indifference to the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo or what it might have represented.¹³⁷¹ Arnold notes that Selim’s vast empire ruled areas that had never known Muslim rule, and that promulgating himself as the heir to the Abbasid caliphate would have been meaningless in such places, while the majority of the Muslim world had already ignored the Abbasid caliph hosted by the Mamluks for two and a half centuries -- and would likely have been no more enthusiastic about Selim’s claims than they were for those of the Mamluks.¹³⁷²

Finally, P. M. Holt found a minor clue in the annals of the Syrian chronicler Ibn Ṭūlūn, who introduces each year of his *Mufākahat al-khillān* with the names of the reigning caliph and sultan and continues this practice during the early Ottoman period of Egypt and Syria until 926/1519-20, at which point the manuscript ends abruptly. At the start of 924/1518, Ibn Ṭūlūn, having mentioned al-Mutawakkil III as *amīr al-mu'minīn*, adds “and he has been sent under escort from Egypt to Istanbul by sea.” When the chronicle picks up again in 926/1519-20, he mentions that al-Mutawakkil III is living in Istanbul, yet says nothing about a transfer of the caliphate. Thus according to Holt, “Ibn Ṭūlūn (and doubtless others) saw no break in al-Mutawakkil’s reign when power passed from Ṭūmānbāy to Selim.”¹³⁷³

In Istanbul, however, the caliph continued to receive special treatment and may have been able to access a portion of the gifts and payments he had accumulated in Cairo.¹³⁷⁴ Cairenes remained thirsty for news of their caliph and Ibn Iyās reported that on 2 Dhū al-Qa‘da 925/26 October 1519 an Ottoman ambassador arrived with news that there had been a great falling out between al-Mutawakkil III and his second-cousins Abū Bakr and Aḥmad. Hoping to gain the

¹³⁶⁹ Inalcik, “Selīm.”

¹³⁷⁰ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 408-12; Sourdel, “*Khalīfah*,”; Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, 111.

¹³⁷¹ Baki Tezcan, “Hanafism and the Turks in al-Ṭarasūsī’s *Gift for the Turks* (1352),” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 70-1.

¹³⁷² Arnold, *Caliphate*, 148. See also: Richard W. Bulliet, “The History of the Muslim South,” *Al-‘Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists* 20, no. 2 (2008): 61.

¹³⁷³ Holt, “Observations,” 507.

¹³⁷⁴ Al-Qaramānī also reports that al-Mutawakkil III received a daily allowance of 60 Ottoman dirhams. See: *Akḥbār al-duwal*, 2:226.

upper hand, the sons of Khalīl had sought Selim's intervention after accusing the caliph of extortion and having hoarded a fortune of cash, property, and luxurious fabrics from the widowed families of officers, particularly the vulnerable widow of Ṭūmānbāy and her mother.¹³⁷⁵

Selim had listened eagerly and at length to the charges and the sultan's ministers publicly voiced support for Abū Bakr and Aḥmad and advised the sultan to distance himself from al-Mutawakkil III. Any faith the Sublime Porte had placed in the Abbasid caliphate seemed to evaporate. Ibn Iyās added his own inventory of the caliph's misdeeds and corruption which included gluttony, depravity, and excess, not to mention the caliph's penchant for harp-playing, singing odalisques often financed through the misappropriation of *waqf* properties in his care.¹³⁷⁶ The most likely reason for the family quarrel was that al-Mutawakkil III had suspended the allowances of Abū Bakr and Aḥmad which precipitated their complaints to the Ottoman sultan. Selim had earlier determined that the caliphate's endowment would be divided into three equal shares and administered by al-Mutawakkil to his relatives.¹³⁷⁷

Now interested in auditing Abbasid holdings in Cairo, the sultan dispatched an ambassador to subpoena the caliph's staff and inventory family properties in the old Mamluk capital. The ambassador interviewed the caliph's *dawādār* Bardbak and requested a full accounting of all the sums that Abū Bakr and Aḥmad had received in the five years since the death of their father Khalīl in Muḥarram 920/March 1514. Faced with resistance and evasion from the caliph's Cairene staff and family, the ambassador hounded and harangued them until he obtained the figures for the sultan to uphold the rights of the sons of Khalīl.¹³⁷⁸ Although the caliph had been granted a temporary lease on his office within the Ottoman capital, his apparent transgression ultimately cast him into confinement in the heavily guarded Ottoman fortress of Yedikule, the "Castle of the Seven Walls" in Istanbul.¹³⁷⁹

Meanwhile the rise of the amir Jānim al-Ḥamzāwī threatened the Egyptian administration of Khāyrbak who had emerged as the power favored by the Ottomans. Ibn Iyās linked the

¹³⁷⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:317-8.

¹³⁷⁶ Ibid. See also: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 142.

¹³⁷⁷ The caliphal stipend was under the control of al-Mutawakkil III and expected to be rationed equally among the three Abbasid exiles. The caliph took two thirds for himself and left the remaining one third for his second cousins. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 399.

¹³⁷⁸ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:317-8; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 351-2.

¹³⁷⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:352; al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:226. See also: Finkel, *Osman's Dream*, 54. The Yedikule (*al-Sab'a Qilliyyāt*) fortress was part of a famous wall-fortress built in Istanbul by Mehmed II and also rumored to be the place in which the Ottoman sultan kept his own fortunes and valuables under heavy guard. The precise duration of al-Mutawakkil's stay at Yedikule is unclear. Another reason for his interment there may have been the rumor that many Egyptian prisoners had successfully escaped, and the Ottomans were particularly interested in keeping tabs on the caliph's whereabouts. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 399.

ascendancy of Jānim to Ottoman disillusionment with al-Mutawakkil III. Rumors circulated that the sons of Khalīl had petitioned Selim to confiscate at least one third of the caliphal allowance which the caliph had refused. They also claimed the caliph lived in shameful excess, spending his time engaged in “disgraceful celebrations.” The standing of the caliph also suffered from attacks by Ottoman ministers who pledged support to Khalīl’s sons.¹³⁸⁰

News of Selim’s death reached Cairo by courier in Dhū al-Qa‘da 926/October 1520. A letter from al-Mutawakkil III to his father also reported the event. The caliph eventually obtained freedom under that sultan’s more magnanimous successor, Kanuni Sulaymān the Magnificent (d. 973/1566), who, wishing to “commence his reign through a manifestation of justice,” released the caliph from the Yedikule fortress but apparently failed to include him in the initial return of exiles to Cairo. Sulaymān the Magnificent allowed the caliph to remain in Istanbul for an unspecified amount of time during which he received a daily pension of 60 dirhams.”¹³⁸¹ The caliph remained in Istanbul for some time on this meager stipend before returning to Egypt. While Ibn Iyās is not specific about the date, Sümer believes al-Mutawakkil did not return before the death of his father al-Mustamsik on 19 Rabī‘ II 927/29 March 1521 whereupon he reclaimed the family office in Cairo.¹³⁸²

Later Years

The *Badā’i’* of Ibn Iyās concludes in the year 928/1521-2 after which details on al-Mutawakkil III are sparse. After his return to Egypt, the caliph, having never been officially divested of office by Ottoman or Egyptian authorities, continued using the caliphal title.¹³⁸³

After betraying the Mamluks, Khāyrbak had governed Egypt as an obedient Ottoman governor (though in the style of the Mamluk sultans) until his death in 929/1522. The next year, his replacement, Aḥmad Pasha, attempted to proclaim himself sultan also based on the old Mamluk model. On 6 Rabī‘ II 930/12 February 1524 he summoned an Abbasid (perhaps al-

¹³⁸⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:353.

¹³⁸¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:360, 365; al-Qaramānī, *Akhhbār al-duwal*, 2:226. It is unclear whether Selim or his son Sulaymān ordered the daily stipend and subsequent release of al-Mutawakkil. Ibn Iyās and the Ottoman historian Cenabi states that the caliph received 60 dirhams, though Sümer argues that the caliph would have been paid in *akçes*.

¹³⁸² The Ottoman historian ‘Abdū ş-şamed Diyārbekrī claims al-Mutawakkil returned some years later on 4 Şafar 934/30 October 1527 accompanied by other members of the former Mamluk civilian elite given leave to return by Sulaymān. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:394-403; Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400; Sümer, “Yavuz Selim,” 352; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 49, 62.

¹³⁸³ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400; Sourdel, “*Khalīfah*.” Michael Winter cites Sulaymān’s release of al-Mutawakkil III as further proof that the myth of the caliphal transfer was a later invention, considering that if the Abbasid caliph were a person of importance and authority, the Ottomans would hardly have allowed him to slip through their fingers. See: *Egyptian Society*, 11.

Mutawakkil)¹³⁸⁴ and the four chief qadis (whom he had reinstated after their dismissal by the Ottomans) and pressured them for an endorsement of his sultanate.¹³⁸⁵ “Al-Malik al-Manṣūr” Aḥmad, as pseudo-sultan acting with a caliphal mandate, briefly attempted to buck Istanbul’s authority by minting coins and ordering the *khuṭba* to be given in his name, though he was ultimately thwarted by mutineers in his own ranks shortly before the arrival of a force sent by Sulaymān to crush the revolt.¹³⁸⁶

The Meccan historian Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī (d. 990/1583) claims to have met al-Mutawakkil in 933/1536-7, and notes that after again “becoming caliph in Egypt” (*ṣāra khalīfa bihā*), remained there until his death on 12 Sha‘bān 950/10 November 1543. Quṭb al-Dīn describes al-Mutawakkil III in his later life as well-mannered and generous, a cultured man with a propensity and aptitude for verse.¹³⁸⁷

The date of the caliph’s death, like that of his return to Cairo, however, remains uncertain. The two possible dates for the death of al-Mutawakkil III cited with the most regularity are 945/1538 and 950/1543.¹³⁸⁸ Little is known about the status and numbers of the Abbasid house in Cairo at this time, although we know, according to the historian al-Qaramānī, that at least some of the sons of al-Mutawakkil, including Yaḥyā, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān,¹³⁸⁹ remained in Istanbul enjoying lucrative careers as administrators working for the Ottoman treasury (*waṣīfat dārat min al-khizānat al-‘āmira al-‘uthmāniyya*).¹³⁹⁰ The Ottoman historian Muṣṭafā Cenabi (d.

¹³⁸⁴ Although most secondary scholarship assumes the caliph on hand was al-Mutawakkil III, based on the uncertainty of the caliph’s precise date of return from Istanbul, it is unclear which member of the Abbasid family invested Aḥmad Pasha. Benjamin Lellouch discovered a contemporary Jewish source, the *Megillat Miṣrayim*, a commentary on a Cairene purim scroll written during Aḥmad Pasha’s revolt, which claims that a son or possibly a half-brother of al-Mutawakkil invested Aḥmad Pasha. See: *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 59 note 284. Regardless of which “Abbasid” invested Aḥmad Pasha, his own supporters ousted him just as the forces sent by Sulaymān were closing in. The Abbasid escaped without consequence. See: Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 401.

¹³⁸⁵ Arnold, *Caliphate*, 142; Sümer, “Yavuz Selim,” 353; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 59.

¹³⁸⁶ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 401; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 142; Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 48-51; Michael Winter, “The Re-emergence of the Mamluks Following the Ottoman Conquest,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 93-5; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*, 59.

¹³⁸⁷ Quṭb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 3:185; Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400. On the life of the historian Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī, see: Richard Blackburn, *Journey to the Sublime Porte: Arabic Memoir of a Sharifian Agent’s Diplomatic Mission to the Ottoman Imperial Court in the Era of Suleyman the Magnificent* (Orient-Institut: Beirut, 2005), xi-xvi.

¹³⁸⁸ Al-Qaramānī (*Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:226) names 12 Sha‘bān 945/3 January 1539 as the caliph’s date of death. However, other historians claim al-Mutawakkil died in Egypt in Sha‘bān 950/November 1543 during the reign of Dāwūd Pasha (945-56/1538-49). See: Quṭb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, 3:185; Mar‘ī ibn Yūsuf Karmī, *Nuzha*, 67.

¹³⁸⁹ There is some indication of a third son, Yaḥyā. See: Sümer, “Yavuz Selim,” 353.

¹³⁹⁰ Al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:226.

999/1590) writes that the young men continued to draw pensions from the Ottoman treasury for some time.¹³⁹¹

Later historians such as al-Qaramānī, Cenabi, and Marʿī ibn Yūsuf Karmī (d. 1033/1623-4) believed that after the death of al-Mutawakkil III, the Abbasid caliphate “became extinct from the world.”¹³⁹² Nevertheless, Ottoman era sources demonstrate some awareness of the descendants of al-Mutawakkil at the end of the seventeenth century. Yemen welcomed one “son” of al-Mutawakkil with great ceremony as the “*amīr al-muʾminīn*” and granted him a brief residency. We know that an Abbasid descendant in Yemen was on hand in 1112/1701 to welcome emissaries sent by the last Safavid Shāh Ḥusayn (1105-35/1694-1722).¹³⁹³ The famous historian and firsthand observer of Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, included the obituary of the last known Abbasid descendant residing in Egypt in 1220/1805-6; a certain ‘Uthmān Effendi ibn Saʿd al-‘Abbāsī [al-Anṣārī], who had been a mildly successful Ottoman financial administrator in the eighteenth century, and whose father had been a direct descendant of al-Mutawakkil III.¹³⁹⁴

Conclusion

By virtue of its complicated and at times reactive development, the history of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo is difficult both to map and to accurately periodize. Nevertheless, the narrative preserved in Mamluk chronicles and biographical literature exhibits the further evolution of what was already a centuries-old Islamic institution during what amounted to “borrowed time” under the Mamluk regime. This chapter has, it is hoped, contributed to an understanding of Mamluk society itself by tracing the caliphs’ movements within the political, religious, and social spheres. Whether the nominal delegator of authority for sultans and other appointees, the liaison between the ruling elite and ‘*ulamā*’, or as the figurehead of popular protest and revolt, the Abbasid caliph retained significance because many in society *perceived* that he did.

As we have seen from this dynastic history, the classical prerogatives of the caliphal officeholders could be omitted at the whim of a sultan or ruling magnate. Nevertheless, the

¹³⁹¹ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400.

¹³⁹² Al-Qaramānī, *Akhbār al-duwal*, 2:226; Marʿī ibn Yūsuf Karmī, *Nuzha*, 67; Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400.

¹³⁹³ Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 400-1.

¹³⁹⁴ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *Taʾrīkh ‘ajāʾib al-āthār fī al-tarājim wa-al-akhbār al-maʾrūf* (Beirut, 1997), 3:75-6. See also: Holt, “Some Observations,” 507. Holt traced Abbasid claimants in northern Sudan among the Jaʿaliyyūn, concluding that local dynasties may have been trying to use Abbasid prestige and also some of the descendants of the caliph’s entourage began heading south to Nubia. Barthold found that in addition to strains of the Abbasid family which he identified in Yemen, others likely survived in an unknown capacity somewhere in the Ottoman Empire. See: Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 401.

caliphs had certain responsibilities that are rarely discussed by modern scholarship. In detailing the lives and duties of the caliphs as units of study, the details and full expanse of the office under Mamluk times can come into clearer focus. The subsequent chapters of this dissertation will explore the functions of the caliphal office as well as its resonance in Mamluk society.

Chapter Three: Contemporary Perspectives I: Mamluk Era Understandings of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo in Jurisprudential, Advice, and Courtly Literature

An exploration of contemporary scholarly opinion may help contextualize the history of the dynasty covered in the previous chapter. By examining an array of descriptions composed by the professional classes, yet another image of the Cairo caliphate begins to emerge.

Theological pronouncements on the imamate (*imāma*) or caliphate (*khilāfa*) provide a pragmatic, idealized outline for the structure of leadership, while also attempting to describe and legitimize the political status quo. Thus, some of these works occasionally criticize the historical reality or indicate instances of rulers' abuses. Other works seek to advise the rulers without always being "ideal," while jurisprudential works prescribed how government and politics *ought* to work, and emphases changed from author to author.

Members of the Mamluk non-military elite wrote on a multitude of topics whether discussing the organization of government or chronicling the history of Islam down to the modern day. It is therefore difficult to distinguish between 'ulamā' and bureaucrats, since it was fairly commonplace for a bureaucrat working in the administration to have formal training in Islamic sciences, just as a doctor of the religious law might hold an official government posting.¹³⁹⁵

Authors of historical works, who will be treated in the next chapter, described the caliphate in practice and occasionally offered commentary. Encyclopedists and genre-transcending authors such as al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn wrote on the imamate and caliphate within broader works that also included historical writing.

The line between religious scholar and court secretary was thus frequently unclear and vocational overlap routine. Scholars from all vocations wrote historical works which forces any categorization to remain tentative at best. As a result this chapter examines literature comprised of jurisprudential works, advice literature, and commentary on government institutions taken from scribal manuals, with regard to the placement of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo within the existing Mamluk political structure.

¹³⁹⁵ See: Li Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997):29-30.

The Sunni Theory of the Caliphate and the Mamluk Era

By at least 247/861, the Abbasid caliphs failed to provide effective leadership on their own. Claiming to rule on their behalf, a succession of amirs and sultans came to the fore in Baghdad. It was amidst the backdrop of usurper dynasties such as the Buyids and Seljuqs that the ‘*ulamā*’ set down important articulations of the imamate that presented the political theory behind the institution in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹³⁹⁶ In the mid-eleventh century, the Shāfi‘ī lawyer or legal doctor (*faqīh*) ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) compiled his *Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, a work which became an important authority on the imamate/caliphate. Before this, the subject had been confined to works of theology (*kalām*) or principles of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*). Al-Māwardī and his predecessors shared a judgment that the establishment of the caliphal institution itself remained incumbent upon the greater Muslim community (*umma*),¹³⁹⁷ even though the age of the “rightly guided” Rāshidūn caliphs had lasted only thirty years before its devolution into kingship (*mulk*) according to a ḥadīth of the Prophet.¹³⁹⁸ As the *umma* awaited a return to caliphate based on the prophetic model (*khilāfat al-nubuwwa*), the Muslim community lived in a theoretical “state of emergency,” protected and guided by the ‘*ulamā*’.¹³⁹⁹

As the scholars and the community anticipated the restored classical caliphate, the ‘*ulamā*’ established an alternate group of social institutions that provided new ideals to live by, suggesting that individuals could live a pious life without political involvement. Nevertheless, the interests of the ‘*ulamā*’ remained entwined with those of the amirs and sultans whom they served in various capacities.¹⁴⁰⁰

Jurists from later Abbasid times down to the Mamluk period knew that *their* caliphs had failed to measure up to the standard set by the Rāshidūn caliphs. Many of them regarded these Abbasids as place-holders relieved of their political and spiritual power, indeed, “caliphs in the realm of imperfect reality who played by the rules with sufficient overt fidelity to be accepted as approximations of the ideal.”¹⁴⁰¹

However, just as al-Māwardī sought to preserve the classical caliphate in times of trouble, some Mamluk authors may have wished to keep the idea of the caliphate alive until the appearance of more favorable circumstances. Earlier ideas from the east undoubtedly influenced

¹³⁹⁶ Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule: Government and Islam – Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 221-3; Ovais Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 94-5.

¹³⁹⁷ Crone, *God’s Rule*, 224.

¹³⁹⁸ The ḥadīth has been preserved by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in the *Musnad Aḥmad*, 5:220, 221.

¹³⁹⁹ Anjum, *Politics*, 5-7.

¹⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁰¹ Crone, *God’s Rule*, 226.

Mamluk period political discourse on the imamate/caliphate. Al-Māwardī in his *Aḥkām*, grappled with two problems: the caliph's loss of personal power, which he dealt with by making the caliph a ward of the Buyids. Occupying wardship (*ḥujr*) allowed the caliph to hold office, as opposed to being a captive of brute force whose office would be forfeit. The second problem was that even as an office-holder, the caliph no longer ruled.¹⁴⁰² Because the caliph was no longer ruler of *Dār al-Islām*, al-Māwardī re-imagined reality, by defining those who had seized power in the provinces as *ad hoc* governors of the caliph, and that the caliph could either appoint a lieutenant in a province (*imārat al-istikā'*), or provide legitimacy to a usurper after the fact (*imārat al-istīlā'*).¹⁴⁰³ By legitimizing usurpation, al-Māwardī allowed the continuation of the caliphal institution and maintained Islamic unity by providing a legal basis for the recognition of local governors who had seized power.¹⁴⁰⁴ It is noteworthy that al-Māwardī's exposition provided no power to the Islamic community itself, and ultimately undermined the role of the *umma* by detaching it from actual power.¹⁴⁰⁵

Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), another possible influence on the political discourse of the Mamluk period, had been a resident scholar and astrologer at the Ismā'īlī fortress of Alamūt and later an advisor and supervisor of religious foundations for Hülāgū.¹⁴⁰⁶ An important intellectual during the post-caliphal Mongol period of Iran, al-Ṭūsī wrote the highly influential *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī* (*Nasirean Ethics*) which was widely read in the decades after his death.¹⁴⁰⁷ The

¹⁴⁰² Ibid., 232-3.

¹⁴⁰³ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006), 39-41. See also: H. A. R. Gibb, "Constitutional Organization," in *Law in the Middle East*, Vol. 1, *The Origin and Development of Islamic Law*, ed. Majid Khadduri and Herbert Liebensy (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 18-20; Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 98-101.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Crone, *God's Rule*, 233.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Anjum, *Politics*, 121, 131-4.

¹⁴⁰⁶ When Hülāgū arrived in Baghdad to begin his siege, Muslim astrologers apparently warned him that if the Abbasid caliph were to be harmed, cosmic upheaval would unleash devastation upon the Mongol army. It was Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī who advised Hülāgū to proceed, and that no such disasters would occur. See: Rashīd al-Dīn Faḡlullāh Hamadānī, *Jamī' al-tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Raushan and Muṣṭafā Mūsavī (Tehran: Alborz, 1373/1994-5), 2:1007; Mufaḡḡal ibn Abī al-Faḡḡ'il, *Kitāb al-naḥj al-saḡīd wa-al-durr al-farīd fī-mā ba'da ta'rīkh Ibn al-'Amīd* or *Histoire des sultans mamlouks*, ed. and trans. Edgard Blochet (Paris, 1911, 1920, 1932), 92 note 2.

¹⁴⁰⁷ The role of justice was an important theme and demonstrates the possible influence of Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Given Mamluk interest in the Chinggisid *yasa*, it is worth considering whether there was a demand for a book like al-Ṭūsī's *Nasirean Ethics* which, while initially written during the author's residence at the Ismā'īlī fortress of Alamūt, he later re-dedicated to a Mongol governor. The Mamluks may well have been interested in works which sought to advise the Mongols on statecraft. Even al-Suyūṭī recognized "al-Nāṣir al-Ṭūsī" as an important notable among the Mongols, whom he also acknowledged as "chief of the philosophers." See: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), 386. For other Mamluk nods to al-Ṭūsī's service in the Mongol administration, see: Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-waḡayāt al-mashāḡīr wa-al-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī (Beirut, 1990-2000), 49:13; Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta'rīkh* (Beirut, 1966), 13:242; Maḡmūd al-'Aynī,

book's Platonic and Farabian influence may well have inspired later writers of the Mamluk era such as Ibn Khaldūn or Ibn 'Arabshāh who engaged in political philosophy. The work itself was written in Persian with many Arabized terms. There was interest in Mongol politics, culture, and law throughout the Mamluk sultanate and the book may have received attention in light of curiosity about what was read at the Ilkhanid court. *Nasirean Ethics* drew on all three political traditions: monotheist, Persian, and Greek.¹⁴⁰⁸ A largely theoretical work, the *Nasirean Ethics* discussed the imamate, the functions of the ruler and the idea of the philosopher king in its third and final discourse on politics which also included a section that offered advice to a ruler.

One is tempted to point to the similarities between the society outlined by al-Ṭūsī's blend of Plato's Ideal City, Aristotle, and al-Ṭūsī's own Islamic-based philosophy and Iranian wisdom in its relation to the way that some Mamluk scholars envisaged Cairo as the ideal society which protected the holy law of Islam, the imamate, and allowed the 'ulamā' to engage unmolested in scholarly pursuits. Al-Ṭūsī wrote that the Virtuous City could provide for varied social and religious practices, but the ruler must be the Absolute King, or in al-Ṭūsī's conception, the "imām" who served to rightly guide society to perfection.¹⁴⁰⁹

Also like al-Māwardī, al-Ṭūsī understood the imamate to extend well beyond a single man holding a single office. In his discussion of the necessity of civilization and the need for men to inhabit civilized society, the imamate represents a much larger entity comprised of notables that fulfilled important functions and governing institutions divided along the lines of the traditional Irano-Islamic social classes well known in Mamluk Egypt: men of the sword (amirs and military personnel), men of the pen (scholars and bureaucrats), men of negotiation (merchants, tax collectors) and men of husbandry (farmers).¹⁴¹⁰

The juristic tradition on the Sunni caliphate has given rise to a well-developed scholarly discourse. The consensus among modern scholars, based on the influential work of Sir Hamilton Gibb, is that the majority of treatises on the caliphate had been composed at times of crisis by Sunni scholars at least partially as apologia for the demoted status of the office and also to prove that the majority of the *umma* had not fallen into error by rejecting the positions of the Shiites and

'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān: 'aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 1:387.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia: les notions morales dans la littérature persane du 3e/9e au 7e/13e siècle* (Paris, 1986), 444-7; Crone, *God's Rule*, 254.

¹⁴⁰⁹ In the fourth section of his discourse on politics, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī includes a section addressing government and the manner of kings in the style of Iranian advice literature. In it, the author describes the imamate, or virtuous government, as having the purpose of perfecting man and attaining felicity. See: *The Nasirean Ethics*, tr. G. M. Wickens (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 192. Elsewhere, al-Ṭūsī demands that the king have seven qualities including good descent, lofty aspiration, firm opinion, royal resolve, the ability to endure suffering, personal wealth, and upright assistance (227-8).

¹⁴¹⁰ Al-Ṭūsī, *Nasirean Ethics*, 216-8, 230.

Kharijites.¹⁴¹¹ The influential conclusion of Gibb and his student Ann Lambton was that in their insistence on the historical continuity of the caliphate, many of the Asharite jurists of the eleventh century, particularly al-Māwardī, ultimately set the institution on its path to insignificance.¹⁴¹² This could be seen in the way the jurists struggled to justify the changes in the political structure which ultimately compromised the legal justification for the caliphate. The political theory of the caliphate thus evolved as new political realities shifted and jurists wished to accommodate coercive power and usurpation.¹⁴¹³ Nevertheless, the caliphate remained an innocuous and strangely necessary “symbol of *sharī‘a*” even after the Mongol invasions.¹⁴¹⁴

Mamlukists and specialists on the medieval Middle East have long bemoaned a perceived period of extended creative stagnation in the Mamluk period, viewing it as an especially dark age for inspired political writing and advice literature. Rather broadly, Marshall Hodgson considered later medieval Islamic political thought to have forsaken hope of formulating political life based on its own norms.¹⁴¹⁵ Ulrich Haarmann identified a scarcity in Mamluk political writing and a lack of political theoreticians based on a “petrified conservatism” attributable to the fact that by escaping Mongol subjugation, scholars and jurists living under Mamluk protection had experienced a profound loyalty to orthodox Islamic “social and legal norms” which they were hesitant to abandon or innovate against.¹⁴¹⁶ More recently, in addition to being “somewhat pusillanimous,” Robert Irwin has described political theory articulated by the Mamluk *‘ulamā’* as “sparse, sententious, and uninspiring,” while Anne Broadbridge judged that but for a few examples, Mamluk authors “displayed little interest in writing advice literature at all.”¹⁴¹⁷

¹⁴¹¹ See: H. A. R. Gibb, “Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate,” in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 141-50; idem, “Al-Mawardi’s Theory of the Caliphate,” 151-65; idem, “Constitutional Organization,” 22-3.

¹⁴¹² Gibb, “Al-Mawardi’s Theory of the Caliphate,” 164; Lambton, *State and Government*, 98-102; Mona Hassan, “Modern Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyyah,” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 339.

¹⁴¹³ Gibb, “Some Considerations,” 142-4; Lambton, *State and Government*, 138-43.

¹⁴¹⁴ D. B. MacDonald, “The Caliphate,” *Muslim World* 7 (1917): 357; Gibb, “Some Considerations,” 41; Lambton, *State and Government*, 14; idem, “[Khalīfa] in political theory,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:948.

¹⁴¹⁵ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 182-3.

¹⁴¹⁶ Ulrich Haarmann, “Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs: Changing ‘Ulamā’ Attitudes Towards Mamluk Rule in the Late Fifteenth Century,” *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988): 61-2.

¹⁴¹⁷ Robert Irwin, “The Political Thinking of the “Virtuous Ruler,” Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 42; Anne Broadbridge, “Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society: The Influence of Ibn Khaldūn on the Writings of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 233.

Juristic positions of the post-Mongol period were in many ways a continuation of earlier articulations of authority and leadership. Nevertheless they faced similar problems of justification for the classical imamate amidst what had become a deeply fractured Sunni Muslim empire now limited to Egypt, Syria, and the Ḥijāz. It was in this milieu that legal scholars sought to negotiate the *sharīʿ* relationship of the Mamluk sultan and the Abbasid caliphate. Both Gibb and Lambton considered the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo irrelevant and illegitimate for its failure to receive recognition by any of the major jurists of the period.¹⁴¹⁸ Their subsequent analysis of the imamate in Mamluk times culminates with the juristic collapse of the imamate in the works of Ibn Jamāʿa who legitimized the imamate of usurpation and Ibn Taymiyya who, according to a problematic interpretation by Henri Laoust, claimed that the caliphate was no longer obligatory if the duties of the *imām* were executed by the sultan and the *ʿulamāʾ*.¹⁴¹⁹ This exposition of Mamluk-era juristic theory on the caliphate neatly reflects and explains the historical developments of the time, particularly in light of the largely ceremonial role given to the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo who had no political power. However, recent research has attempted to show that the writings of Mamluk jurists like Ibn Jamāʿa and Ibn Taymiyya, firmly rooted in the classical understanding of the imamate, did not take quite the “drastic departure” attributed to them in modern scholarship.¹⁴²⁰ In fact, both jurists, as shall be later discussed amongst others, may well have sought to present the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo as a portion of the imamate *du jour*, recognition of which was incumbent upon all people of Islam.

The following discussion of Mamluk period jurists and litterateurs is not meant to be a definitive analysis, but seeks to present some contemporary perspectives on the changing nature of the imamate on the Mamluk political scene as well as any implications for the Cairo Abbasids. Questions raised thus far by the secondary scholarship are important in helping to move towards an inclusive understanding of the caliphate as it existed in the Mamluk period.

¹⁴¹⁸ Indeed Lambton titled her chapter on Mamluk jurists “the Destruction of the Caliphate” while Gibb bleakly observed that in an effort to cleanse Islam of corruption, Ibn Taymiyya preached a return to earlier doctrines and attacked the existing juristic tradition supporting the maintenance of a caliphate. See: Gibb, “Some Considerations,” 143; idem, “Constitutional Organization,” 23-4; Lambton, *State and Government*, 138; John E. Woods, *The Aqqayunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 7; Mona Hassan, “Modern Interpretations,” 339-40.

¹⁴¹⁹ Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politique de Taḳī-d-dīn Aḥmad b. Taymīya* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1939), 282-3; Hassan, “Modern Interpretations,” 339.

¹⁴²⁰ Mona F. Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate: The Trauma and Aftermath of 1258 and 1924” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 154-67; idem, “Modern Interpretations,” 338-43; Anjum, *Politics*, 26-34.

Making Way for Baybars: The Anonymous *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya fī ṭarīq al-imāma*

The anonymous thirteenth century treatise on the imamate, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya fī ṭarīq al-imāma*, was dedicated to Baybars and likely written just after the investitures of al-Mustanṣir and al-Ḥākim in Cairo.¹⁴²¹ The treatise represents an early attempt to set down a juristic interpretation in light of the Mamluks' Abbasid restoration. The author of the *Miṣbāḥ* argues for the necessity of the imamate to ward off usurpers and ensure the continuation of Islamic civilization, mainly by imposing order in both religious and temporal matters.¹⁴²² Although the author refers to both sultan and *imām*, quite likely embodied in a single person, he stipulates that the *imām*, in addition to sound mind, maturity, freedom, and probity, must possess knowledge of the *sharī'a* and be able to engage in *ijtihād*, in order to reach opinions on legal cases through analogous reasoning derived from the Qur'ān and *sunna*.¹⁴²³

The author of the *Miṣbāḥ* departs from the classical requirement that the *imām* be a descendant of the Prophet's tribe of Quraysh, thus opening the way for the legitimization of Baybars's rule. The treatise further asserts that if the imamate is taken by force, necessity dictates that the act be accepted, even if the *imām* is ignorant of legal norms.¹⁴²⁴

From what little information is apparent about the author, it is possible that it was written by someone close to Baybars with strong Sufi leanings. It is thus that the *Miṣbāḥ* seems concerned with clearing the way for the reign of the Mamluk sultan who rules by virtue of his competence, power and ability to protect the religion. No Qurayshī blessing is necessary to furnish the imamate with religious legitimization; in its place is a stronger role for Sufis and '*ulamā*' in advisory and ruling affairs.¹⁴²⁵

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī and the Caliphal Threat

Despite Sanhāja Berber origins, the Mālikī jurist Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285) grew up in Old Cairo and later held important positions in city madrasas, though he never

¹⁴²¹ Wilferd Madelung, "A Treatise on the Imamate Dedicated to Sultan Baybars I," in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Part 1*, ed. A. Fodor (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University Chair for Arabic Studies & Csoma de Kőrös Society, Section of Islamic Studies, 1995), 91-102. It is difficult to determine an exact date for the composition of the treatise. Madelung has suggested that Baybars's Sufi advisor *shaykh* Khidr may have been the author, which would place its composition after the Cairo investitures of al-Mustanṣir and al-Ḥākim.

¹⁴²² Ibid., 92-7.

¹⁴²³ Ibid., 94-5.

¹⁴²⁴ Ibid., 95.

¹⁴²⁵ Ibid., 101-2.

officially held office as qadi for his rite.¹⁴²⁶ Like earlier Asharite authors, he allowed rationalism to enter his thought on the imamate and sought to protect the minority positions of independent scholars who did not enjoy the support of the ruling regime in Shāfi‘ī-dominated Cairo, prior to Baybars’s institution of the four chief qadi-ships.¹⁴²⁷ Al-Qarāfi’s *Kitāb al-iḥkām fī tamyiz al-fatāwā ‘an al-aḥkām wa-taṣarrufāt al-qāḍī wa-al-imām*, was likely written around 661/1262 and offers a snapshot of the delicate religious and political situation at the onset of Baybars’s sultanate and investiture of two Abbasid caliphs.¹⁴²⁸

The legalistic ramifications of resurrecting and inserting an Abbasid caliphate into the religio-political landscape had yet to be seen and wariness may well have urged al-Qarāfi, already writing from an embattled minority position, to define and limit the role of important positions in the religious structure such as caliph, qadi, and *muftī*, which he understood to be mutually inclusive.¹⁴²⁹ Balancing the three authorities was important to al-Qarāfi, who discussed the degree to which new caliphal decrees should be binding.¹⁴³⁰ The issue was of some urgency: never before had Egypt been subject directly to an Abbasid caliph in its midst; and the caliphs of Baghdad had operated within the confines of a unique arrangement with local scholars under a political framework distinct from that of early Mamluk Egypt.¹⁴³¹

Above all, in regards to the caliph, al-Qarāfi wished to illustrate that any of the caliph’s actions, whether a discretionary injunction, binding decision or fatwa, differed significantly from a (legally binding) fatwa of the Prophet since the opinion of the caliph was subject to human error.¹⁴³² In his need to secure equal footing, al-Qarāfi demanded that the fatwas of caliphs and qadis be taken as nothing more than individual opinions.¹⁴³³ In this way, writing in anticipation of the caliph and perhaps expecting the worst, al-Qarāfi may have wished to limit Abbasid power in Cairo. He identified two categories of the caliph’s jurisdiction: various religious practices and other matters outside of what was dictated by scripture such as prosecuting *jihād*. If the caliph’s fatwa contradicted the popular consensus of the jurisprudents, the fatwa of the latter could be

¹⁴²⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfi, *al-Iḥkām fī tamyiz al-fatāwā ‘an al-aḥkām wa-taṣarrufāt al-qāḍī wa-al-imām*, ed. Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzāq (Cairo, 1989), 13-4; Sherman A. Jackson, “Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfi,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 9:436.

¹⁴²⁷ Jackson, “Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfi,” 436.

¹⁴²⁸ Sherman Jackson, “The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-A‘azz and the Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamluk Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995): 58.

¹⁴²⁹ Sherman Jackson, “From Prophetic Action to Constitutional Theory: A Novel Chapter in Medieval Jurisprudence,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993): 81-2.

¹⁴³⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴³¹ Ibid. On the provincial status of Egypt during the early Abbasid caliphate, see: Hugh Kennedy, “Egypt as a Province in the Islamic Caliphate, 641-868,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 76-85.

¹⁴³² Jackson, “From Prophetic Action to Constitutional Theory,” 83.

¹⁴³³ Ibid.

accepted as an endowment of legal right and the caliph's fatwa ignored as non-binding.¹⁴³⁴ In summing up the innovations of al-Qarāfī's work on the imamate, a modern legal scholar sees the *Tamyīz* as representative of "the first significant attempt by a medieval Muslim thinker to make a substantive contribution to a constitutional theory that assumes neither the caliph's moral culpability, nor his impotence in the face of more powerful contenders."¹⁴³⁵

Al-Qarāfī's discussion of the *imām* rests on the notion that many of the *imām*'s actions stem from issues of public interest (*maṣlaḥa*) rather than scripture (*dalīl*). With individual authority reliant on the ruler's ability to exercise coercive power on society and enjoy *al-sultana amma*. Al-Qarāfī saw the offices of *imām*, *muftī*, and qadi as mutually inclusive and assumed equality between the three positions.¹⁴³⁶

It may be that the work of al-Qarāfī, like the *Miṣbāḥ*, presents an interesting glimpse of the religious landscape in Cairo shortly after Baybars and the Abbasid caliphs arrived on the scene. In it, we find some of the '*ulamā*' who did not enjoy strong influence attempting to preserve their interests from the reintroduction of a caliph into society. It was important to al-Qarāfī that the caliph could be ignored by the religious establishment if he made a controversial or unpopular decree.

Ibn Jamā'a on Usurpation and the Qurayshī Obligation

The Shāfī'ī chief qadi Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Jamā'a (d. 733/1333) produced one of the most famous works on Islamic constitutional theory during the Mamluk period. His *Tahrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām* has long been consulted in theoretical studies of the caliphate and is a mainstay in contextual analyses of the Mamluk political system.¹⁴³⁷ *Tahrīr al-aḥkām* revisits the subject matter of previous treatises such as the legal requirements for the imamate, the obligatory nature of the institution, as well as legal sources of revenue, the means of selecting a caliph, and perhaps most importantly, the legality and importance of *jihād*, and dispersing provisions among troops.¹⁴³⁸

¹⁴³⁴ Ibid., 85.

¹⁴³⁵ Ibid., 86.

¹⁴³⁶ Jackson, "From Prophetic Action to Constitutional Theory," 76.

¹⁴³⁷ Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām*, ed. Hans Kofler, "Handbuch des islamischen Staats- und Verwaltungsrechtes von Badr-ad-Dīn Ibn Ġama'ah," *Islamica* 6 (1934): 349-414 and 7 (1935): 1-64. On Ibn Jamā'a's scholarly contribution and the career of his family see: Kamal Salibi, "Banū Jamā'a: A Dynasty of Shāfī'ī Jurists in the Mamluk Period," *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 97-109; Jørgen S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Maẓālim under the Bahrī Mamlūks, 662/1264-789/1387* (Istanbul: Nederland Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985), 68-71.

¹⁴³⁸ Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, 6:355-74. The work is most heavily concerned with exhorting the Mamluks to carry out *jihād*. See: Ovamir Anjum, "Ibn Jamā'ah, Badr al-Dīn," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*, ed. Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1:447-9.

Contemporary scholars have seized upon a key passage of Ibn Jamā'a's treatise which claims that an imamate can be conferred to a possessor of force (*shawka*) and military might (*ghalaba*).¹⁴³⁹ In the eleventh century, even al-Māwardī recognized *de facto* amirates seized forcibly, but Ibn Jamā'a, writing as each Mamluk *khushdāshiyya* faction fought its cohorts to establish its leader as sultan, went further to maintain that coercive power alone secured legally binding authority. In other words, any man capable of seizing authority held it by right.¹⁴⁴⁰ Some modern scholarship casts Ibn Jamā'a as the originator of the idea which accepted the absorption of the caliphate and sultanate into a single *imām* by way of coercive power.¹⁴⁴¹ However, evidence suggests that Ibn Jamā'a's position was hardly as revolutionary as previously supposed. The idea was already extant as part of the Mamluk tradition of imamate treatises in the anonymous *Miṣbāḥ*,¹⁴⁴² and more recently Mona Hassan has identified earlier strains of Ḥanbalī law that recognized the seizure of power as a legitimate means of acquiring the caliphate, an idea which had precedence in Ibn Jamā'a's own Shāfi'ī tradition, including the eleventh century thought of the Imām al-Ḥaramayn 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), who opposed the idea but was aware of earlier Shāfi'ī "shaykhs" who did not.¹⁴⁴³ Thus the amirate of seizure was by no means a unique fourteenth century solution crafted as a response to the changing political realities of Egypt.

It is worth mentioning that Ibn Jamā'a, unlike the author of the *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya fī ṭarīq al-imāma*, did not abandon the classical stipulation that the *imām* be a descendant of the Quraysh.¹⁴⁴⁴ This allowed Ibn Jamā'a to provide a *de facto* position for the Abbasids in his theory of government.¹⁴⁴⁵

The Mamluk sultan had seized power forcibly and installed an Abbasid caliph to delegate control over affairs to him in order to preserve order and ensure the obedience of the community. The *imām* was expected to spread and defend Islam in consultation with the 'ulamā' and by prosecuting *jihād* and upholding justice which Ibn Jamā'a counted among his most significant

¹⁴³⁹ Ibid. Gibb described Ibn Jamā'a's conclusion as one of practicality, in which caliphate ceased and imamate continued with only the sultan exercising temporal authority. He accused Ibn Jamā'a of divorcing *sharī'a* from actual power in a contradiction seen as anathema by most of the Sunni world. Lambton viewed *Tahrīr al-aḥkām* as the product of a post-Mongol milieu which informed Ibn Jamā'a's supposed pronouncement of the death of the caliphate by the recognition of brutal oligarchs. See: Gibb, "Some Considerations," 143; Lambton, "[Khalīfa] in political theory."

¹⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴¹ Baki Tezcan understood Ibn Jamā'a to be putting the sultanate and caliphate on an equal footing during a period of marginalization for the caliphate. See: "Hanafism and the Turks in al-Ṭarasūsī's *Gift for the Turks* (1352)," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 71.

¹⁴⁴² Madelung, "Treatise on the Imamate," 102.

¹⁴⁴³ Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 156-7.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, 6:355-65.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Madelung, "Treatise on the Imamate," 102; Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 160.

duties.¹⁴⁴⁶ Ibn Jamā'a's second chapter on the delegation of duties opens with the argument that political demands and the vast nature of empire had required caliphs to delegate matters to deputies and governors.¹⁴⁴⁷ He observed that by his own time, kings and sultans received delegation to undertake important functions of state such as appointing qadis, organizing armies, and collecting and dispersing revenues.¹⁴⁴⁸ Ibn Jamā'a acknowledged that the sultan acted in the place of the caliph (*qā'im maqāmahu*), which in itself carried the implication that the Mamluk sultan met every criterion of the classical imamate save Qurayshī lineage which was delivered by virtue of Abbasid delegation.¹⁴⁴⁹ However, if an *imām* received *bay'a* on account of his overpowering strength and military, Ibn Jamā'a claimed that an *imām*'s ignorance or blameworthiness did not invalidate his imamate, and "that anyone for whom the *bay'a* is concluded deserves to be called *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*," and the Qurayshi stipulation goes unmentioned.¹⁴⁵⁰

Ibn Jamā'a, through his description of the *imām*'s duties, continues the trend of earlier treatises in making "sultan" synonymous with "*imām*."¹⁴⁵¹ In his discussion of the mutual obligations between the sultan and caliph on the one hand and the Muslim community on the other, it seems plain that he viewed the two leadership entities as a dyad. The nature of the duties addressed in *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, however, could refer only to the Mamluk sultan, who alone had the strength to defend the frontiers, organize warfare, maintain (forcibly if need be) the precepts of *sharī'a*, and appoint others to uphold prayers.¹⁴⁵² Ibn Jamā'a's blurring of the sultanate and caliphate into a single entity are analogous to the way in which the wazirate and the magistrate were classically understood as separate jurisdictions which all fell under the broader notion of imamate as a functional whole. This interpretation suggests the reality that in the Mamluk period, the caliphate was an annex of the sultanate which the state was expected to keep on retainer in order to supply the sultan with access to Qurayshī lineage and through it, a link to God, the Prophet and perpetual blessings for the state. Emphasizing the importance of a Qurayshī *imām* allowed Ibn Jamā'a to remain vague about that *imām*'s rights, perhaps in fear of any repercussions he may face for explicitly defining any imperative relationship between the Abbasid caliph, the Mamluk sultan, and the populace.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, 6:369-74.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 6:358-9.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. See also: Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 158-9.

¹⁴⁵⁰ Tezcan, "Hanafism and the Turks," 71.

¹⁴⁵¹ Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, 6:359-63.

¹⁴⁵² Ibid., 6:360-1.

In *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, Ibn Jamā'a advanced a view that was wholly complimentary with the original ideology that Baybars and his successors sought to promote: that the Mamluk sultan had subsumed the former role of the caliph while receiving his continuous recognition and cooperation. Because the sultan (with the help of the 'ulamā' on the religious front) could execute the former duties of the caliph and satisfy all the conditions of the office besides Qurayshī descent, Ibn Jamā'a maintains the stipulation of a Qurayshī descendant to bestow *sharī'* legitimacy on the project and satisfy any cultural or traditional demands of the community at large by referring to the resident Abbasid caliph. That Ibn Jamā'a supplied a role for the Abbasid caliph to transmit a kind of hereditary charisma (*baraka*) onto the government is no small matter. It implies that the Abbasid caliph satisfied an important demand of traditional Islamic authority and the conditions of the imamate which segments of the religious establishment felt accountable for. The sultan alone could not satisfy all the demands of the imamate and thus failed to be an absolute replacement for the caliph. Thus, at least in Ibn Jamā'a's conceptualization of what was both mandatory and acceptable for a functioning Islamic political entity, the sultan carried out the caliph's traditional duties while the caliph, despite having little else to do, had a guaranteed role that was hardly as negligible as many studies of the caliphate in the post-Mongol period tend to suggest.¹⁴⁵³

Ibn Taymiyya: Dismissal of the Caliphate?

In Ḥarrān, Syria, not long after the Mongols ended the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, the prominent Banū Taymiyya clan had been among the first notables to renew the *bay'a* pledge to the caliph al-Ḥākim brought to the city by the amir Āqūsh al-Barlī in 659-60/1261.¹⁴⁵⁴ Later, after fleeing the Mongols to Damascus, the Banū Taymiyya produced one of the most influential Ḥanbalī jurists in Islamic history, Aḥmad Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).

Debate over Ibn Taymiyya's Understanding of the Caliphate

Scholarly interpretations of Ibn Taymiyya's position on the caliphate are varied to say the least. Recent research suggests that the wide array of conflicting positions stem from an often

¹⁴⁵³ Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 160.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1990-2000), 48:81; Khalīl ibn Ayyub al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 6:318; al-Suyūfī, *Tārīkh al-khulafā'*, 383. Although Ibn Taymiyya was born only two or three years after the fall of Baghdad, his father 'Abd al-Ḥalīm had been a prominent member of the clan at the time. See: Yūsuf ibn Taghrībīrdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi ba'da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1984-93), 7:147-8.

selective reading of the source material.¹⁴⁵⁵ Much of the modern scholarship faithfully repeats the notion that Ibn Taymiyya advocated a full abolition of the caliphate, which in light of historical changes and the rise of sultans, he declared no longer obligatory (*wājib*). The conclusion itself seems a radical exit from the tradition of Sunni juristic treatises on the caliphate that sought to affirm its mandatory nature and define its power.¹⁴⁵⁶ The genesis of this confused interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya appears to have originated with the work of the French scholar Henri Laoust.¹⁴⁵⁷ To arrive at his conclusions, one study has indicated that Laoust fundamentally misread at least two key passages of Ibn Taymiyya's *Minhāj al-sunna* dealing with the Shiite occulted *imām*, and interpreted them instead as a rejection of the Sunni caliphate, whereas, in fact, Ibn Taymiyya clearly and consistently considered the caliphate and all of its classical (i.e., pre-Māwardī) stipulations to be an obligation on the *umma* to regulate itself, because the Prophet had named the caliphate as a model in the so-called "thirty years" *ḥadīth*.¹⁴⁵⁸ In his compendium of fatwas, *Majmū' al-fatāwa*, Ibn Taymiyya writes:

In our view, kingship (*mulk*) is essentially unlawful, and the obligation is to set up a Prophetic Caliphate (*khilāfat al-nubuwwa*). This is because the Prophet said, "You must follow my practice and the practice of the rightly guided caliphs after me; stick to it and hold it fast. Refrain from innovation, for every innovation is an error." [...] This *ḥadīth* is therefore a command; it exhorts us to follow by necessity the practice of the Caliphate (of the Prophet), enjoins us to abide by it and warns us against deviation from it. It is a command from him and makes the establishment of the caliphate a definite duty [...] Again, the fact that the Prophet expressed his dislike for kingship that will follow the Prophetic Caliphate proves that kingship lacks in something which is compulsory in religion [...].¹⁴⁵⁹

¹⁴⁵⁵ See: Banan Malkawi and Tamara Sonn, "Ibn Taymiyya on Islamic Governance," in *Islam, the State, and Political Authority: Medieval Issues and Modern Concerns*, ed. Asma Afsaruddin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 121; Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 338-43.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 338.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Laoust's study introduced a reading of Ibn Taymiyya which suggested several noteworthy departures from the tradition of Sunni treatises on the imamate, particularly the notion that the imamate was not obligatory, and that numerous simultaneous imams were acceptable. For decades, subsequent scholars deemed his influential conclusions on Ibn Taymiyya's alleged "dismissal" of the caliphate to be authoritative. See: Gibb, "Constitutional Organization," 23-4; Lambton, *State and Government*, 145, 147-8; E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), 51-2; Khan, *Political Thought*, 38-9. For a more recent assessment of the scholarship, see: Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought*, 26-31.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 339-40. These stipulations include the *imām*'s descent from Quraysh, the acceptable methods of succession, and proper electoral procedures (Anjum, *Politics*, 28, 253, 257). See also: Laoust, *Essai*, 282; Khan, *Political Thought*, 129.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Anjum, *Politics*, 257.

Ibn Taymiyya's precise views of the Sunni caliphate are scattered and not to be found in his *fiqh* work on political thought, *al-Siyāsa al-shar'īyya*.¹⁴⁶⁰ Any study of Ibn Taymiyya's thought on the caliphate requires that several works be consulted and that the reader draw a number of inferences. Ibn Taymiyya addressed the subject with consistency in the context of wider discussions of authority and obedience in works such as: *Majmū' al-fatāwa*, *Minhāj al-sunna*, and what amounts to a work of *fiqh*/advice literature for the Mamluk elites, *al-Siyāsa al-shar'īyya*.¹⁴⁶¹ More recently, Ovamir Anjum has demonstrated how the clearest exhibition of Ibn Taymiyya's position on politics can be obtained from his chief epistemological and philosophical work, *Dar' ta'ārūḍ al-'aql wa-al-naql*.¹⁴⁶²

Ibn Taymiyya understood the caliphate as an instrument to apply the *sharī'a* with the aim of safeguarding the interests (*maṣlaḥa*) of the Muslim community.¹⁴⁶³ He favored the caliphate above *mulk* and held it as an idealized form of government, though, as prophesized in the "30 years" ḥadīth, one which might never re-emerge. He saw the caliphate as "a moral and legal necessity for the community's welfare and well-being."¹⁴⁶⁴ Ibn Taymiyya insisted that all rulers be held to the standards of the rightly-guided caliphs while also accepting that circumstances had made it impossible for modern rulers to uphold any such lofty standard.¹⁴⁶⁵ For Ibn Taymiyya, dire need had forced the permissibility of *mulk*, which was not comparable to the caliphate.¹⁴⁶⁶

Several aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's conceptualization of authority in Islamic government are worthy of mention. Ibn Taymiyya did not see one single office as the repository for political authority; instead, it was divided among several offices.¹⁴⁶⁷ Based on revelation and reason, Ibn Taymiyya brought the focus from the caliphate to the community and *sharī'a*.¹⁴⁶⁸ It is possible that Ibn Taymiyya, who, like many authors of advice and leadership literature, valued *shūra* consultation, cooperation, and mutual advice between the ruler and the ruled, sought to promote the idea that Islamic society was meant to command the good and forbid the wrong, and that all

¹⁴⁶⁰ Khan, *Political Thought*, 20. On "*siyāsa shar'īyya*" as a doctrine of Islamic law, see: Mohamad Hashim Kamali, "Siyāsah Shar'īyah or the Policies of Islamic Government," *The American Journal of Islamic Sciences* 6, no. 1 (1989): 59-80.

¹⁴⁶¹ Malkawi and Sonn, "Ibn Taymiyya on Islamic Governance," 121; Lambton, *State and Government*, 144.

¹⁴⁶² Anjum, *Politics*, 26.

¹⁴⁶³ Malkawi and Sonn, "Ibn Taymiyya on Islamic Governance," 112; Khan, *Political Thought*, 41. The term *maṣlaḥa* often translates as interests or well-being.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 339.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 164.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 163; idem, "Modern Interpretations," 345. The requirements for the imamate as laid out by the Sunni tradition were acceptable to Ibn Taymiyya, but if a king lacked some of them his rule was nevertheless acceptable to Ibn Taymiyya while rebellion against him was forbidden. See: Anjum, *Politics*, 265.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Anjum, *Politics*, 246.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 27, 196.

political offices were merely a politicization of this Quranic notion. The substance of the government and how closely the rulers followed the Rāshidūn model were also of greater importance to Ibn Taymiyya than the individual person of the ruler.¹⁴⁶⁹

Ibn Taymiyya's treatise on politics, *al-Siyāsa al-sharī'a*, while containing no direct reference to the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo, speaks collectively to various officeholders in the Mamluk bureaucracy. The work itself deals with the actual performance and execution of Islamic governance, which has led many scholars to point to its lack of direct engagement with the caliphate as sufficient evidence of the author's wholesale dismissal of the institution. As Hassan points out, however, the confines of the genre may have driven Ibn Taymiyya to make the editorial decision to address the religious intelligentsia and office holders *en masse* rather than devote individual sections to outlining the details and duties of their offices as later treatises and manuals by Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī and Khalīl al-Zāhirī attempted to do. Failure by Ibn Taymiyya to speak explicitly on the caliphate, however, is not sufficient evidence to support the claim that he excluded it from governance.¹⁴⁷⁰

Ibn Taymiyya and the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo

Recognized as a gifted religious scholar even in his own time, Ibn Taymiyya must have been painfully aware of what the caliphate had become in Mamluk Egypt.¹⁴⁷¹ He viewed the caliphate as a "formal position and rational obligation," and felt it essential that modern rulers closely followed the models of Rāshidūn-style governance. The caliphate, having been endorsed by the Prophet Muḥammad, thus outweighed any competing form of government.¹⁴⁷² However, no ruler, no matter how well-suited or virtuous, could be a *prophetic* caliph until he satisfied the classical criteria and had acquired tangible power. Any ruler incapable of enforcing his own power was, for Ibn Taymiyya, simply not a ruler.¹⁴⁷³ This included an *imām* with a reputable claim to legitimacy, which could only be seen as relevant if he were the actual ruler. For Ibn

¹⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 244-9. This idea appears to be at odds with earlier expressions of Sunni political thought which focused on the rituals of the caliphate and the person of the ruler.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 346.

¹⁴⁷¹ Khan depicts Ibn Taymiyya as distraught by the status of the caliphal office, and claims that the scholar unhappily watched as the Mamluks made a mockery of the institution. See: *Political Thought*, 107.

¹⁴⁷² Anjum, *Politics*, 259.

¹⁴⁷³ Ibid., 258-60, 265. For Ibn Taymiyya, legitimacy was linked to the practical ability to uphold the *sharī'a*.

Taymiyya, “rule” which required the ability to bring justice and peace to the realm, was impossible for a person such as the powerless Abbasid caliph of Cairo.¹⁴⁷⁴

Ibn Taymiyya may well have thought that the *umma* was too focused on formalities, symbols, and images when it came to the caliphate and sought instead to direct the focus of political thought towards reality and practicality, and opined that the divine protection of society stemmed from the *umma* itself rather than the individual *imām*. For Ibn Taymiyya, the community was the real source of legitimacy, and the caliphate was merely one of its needs.¹⁴⁷⁵

Where, then, did all of this leave the Abbasid line of Cairo? Some evidence in Ibn Taymiyya’s *al-Siyāsa al-shar‘iyya* suggests that the author acknowledged the legitimacy of the Mamluk political order by adopting a view of the Abbasid caliph of Cairo as the symbolic chief of the political and military hierarchy.¹⁴⁷⁶ In the course of his broad advice to non-specific public servants for how best each might serve the state, Ibn Taymiyya addresses functionaries whether caliph, sultan, *wālī*, qadi, or *nā’ib*. Hassan considered this statement of the descending order of rank both an acknowledgment and a noteworthy example of the caliph’s theoretical placement above the sultan and other functionaries. At the very least, Ibn Taymiyya’s arrangement suggests his implicit acknowledgment of the existing Mamluk governmental structure with the Abbasid caliph as the symbolic head of the military and religious elites.¹⁴⁷⁷ Even if it was an arbitrary listing of government positions, it signifies Ibn Taymiyya’s receptivity to a Mamluk state structure capped by an Abbasid caliph who played an admittedly limited role.¹⁴⁷⁸ Ibn Taymiyya’s acceptance allows for the ceremonial Abbasid caliph who lent political legitimacy to the true *imām* or king, the Mamluk sultan.

Seen in the proper context of Ibn Taymiyya’s anti-Shiite polemic against the hidden *imām*, however, the author utilized a particular ḥadīth to show that multiple (successive) “caliphs” were the prescribed political leaders as opposed to *imāms* commanding the

¹⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 250. This idea appears to take aim at both to the Shiite notion of the occulted *imām*, as well as the development of the Sunni theory of the caliphate which resulted in the presence of a powerless caliph legitimizing a powerful sultan.

¹⁴⁷⁵ The authority of the Sunni caliph originated from the community he ruled, because of his ability to provide law, order, and defense. See: Gibb, “Constitutional Organization,” 3-4; Woods, *Aqqayunlu*, 5-6; Anjum, *Politics*, 261-4.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Hassan, “Modern Interpretations,” 349.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 350; idem, “Loss of Caliphate,” 167; Khan, *Political Thought*, 145-6. For a descending order of the chief offices of the Mamluk government, see: Aḥmad ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2010), 3:304-12; Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fī ṣinā‘at al-inshā’* (Cairo, 1963), 4:14-43.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Hassan, “Modern Interpretations,” 349-50.

community's obedience through centuries in occultation.¹⁴⁷⁹ The Prophet's own prediction that such caliphs would be numerous was grounds for Ibn Taymiyya's acceptance of nominal, post-Rāshidūn "caliphs," including the Umayyads and Abbasids, and elsewhere he acknowledges that the word "caliph" was merely a title used for political authority.¹⁴⁸⁰

We may conclude with the thought that although Ibn Taymiyya believed the caliphate to be obligatory, he did not accept that the powerless Abbasid caliph of Cairo was a *true* caliph in the classical sense of the *khilāfat al-nubuwwa*. Nevertheless, he was uninterested (or merely concluded that nothing would be gained) in discrediting the sitting Abbasid caliph who was merely superfluous in his conceptualization of Islamic politics. If Ibn Taymiyya's thought critiqued the political situation that he encountered, its essence was that the caliph, if he were really to lead on the classical model, should behave more like his "rightly-guided" early predecessors.

Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) and the Hierarchy of Mamluk Authority

The Syrian scholar and Shāfi'ī qadī Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, while best known for his encyclopedia of scholars sharing his legal rite, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, also authored the briefer and more unusual *Mu'īd al-ni'am wa-mubīd al-niqam*, an advice manual treating over 100 positions and offices in the Mamluk period.¹⁴⁸¹ Dealing with the theme of good intentions and gratitude (*shukr*), the *Mu'īd* provides a sharp critique of the Mamluk government and members of the *'ulamā'* which al-Subkī viewed as having strayed from historic ideals. The work focuses on how Mamluk functionaries, by expressing thanks, might best curry God's favor.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 342. See also: Tariq al-Jamil, "Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Hillī: Shi'ī Polemics and the Struggle for Religious Authority in Medieval Islam," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, eds. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 229-41.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 345.

¹⁴⁸¹ Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Mu'īd al-ni'am wa-mubīd al-niqam*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hawwārī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2007). Tarif Khalidī described the work as part of a so-called "books for comfort" genre which assured Muslim readers that God had not forsaken the community, illustrated by historical examples and guarantees for future salvation. See: *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 187. See also Shaun Marmon's comments on the work: "The Quality of Mercy: Intercession in Mamluk Society," *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998): 133-4. Further evidence of the enduring influence of earlier eastern advice literature in Mamluk Cairo comes from the curious binding of a 397-8/1007 manuscript ascribed to al-Māwardī together with an original manuscript of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's *Mu'īd*. The *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* of pseudo-Māwardī praises three Sāmānīd brothers and likely dates to the reign of the Sāmānīd ruler Naṣr II ibn Aḥmad (301-31/914-43). This implies that the latter work may have been known to Mamluk period thinkers. See: Louise Marlow, "A Samanid Work of Counsel and Commentary: The *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* of Pseudo-Māwardī," *Iran* 45 (2007): 181-92. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:385-6.

The first public office to be treated by the *Mu'īd* is the caliphate.¹⁴⁸² There is perhaps some implicit significance in the author's decision to treat the caliphate first as the most symbolically important position.¹⁴⁸³

The author directs his remarks generally to the occupant of the caliphal office, though his instructions for the caliph do not appear to reflect the contemporaneous Abbasid caliphate with its inability to adjudicate the affairs of litigants. Instead, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī assumes that *any* caliph ought to possess some modicum of power to dispense justice. The *Mu'īd* warns the caliph against approximating the deplorable judicial behavior of the Mamluks who, according to the author, had partiality for whichever party was first to deliver a complaint or grievance. He diagnoses the hearts of the Mamluks as drowned in heedlessness, likening their corrupt justice system to dry arid land, so desperate to absorb water that it would not differentiate between cool, clear water and hot, viscous swill.¹⁴⁸⁴

Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī stresses that the caliph did not owe his divine appointment to office (*wilāya*) to his intellect or virtue, but purely to God's will for which he must have perpetual gratitude.¹⁴⁸⁵ The only true demands on the caliph are that he must equally exercise justice among his people and also engage in actively cultivating God's pleasure through acts of worship such as fasting and night prayer. It is imperative that the caliph not neglect either of these corollaries lest he risk the displeasure of God and be made to forfeit his *wilāya*.¹⁴⁸⁶

It is thus that the author's idealized demands on the caliphate do not reflect entirely the classical caliphate of the treatises on political theory, or the realities of the contemporary Abbasid caliphate. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's configuration acknowledges that the caliphate has been stripped of certain prerogatives such as military leadership, which is formally the domain of the sultan, but insists that the caliph be someone who can ensure impartiality and righteousness for the population.

Wilāya for all positions of authority stems from God and the author clearly lays out the caliph's obligations to religion and justice. For the author of the *Mu'īd*, divine decree alone has mandated the caliph's position and time in office. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī sees the caliph foremost as a religious leader, directly responsible to God, yet one who should dispense justice in some capacity as an adjudicator between disputing parties.

¹⁴⁸² Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu'īd*, 23-4.

¹⁴⁸³ Ibid., 23. Mona Hassan also presented further evidence of scholarly acceptance of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo at the summit of the Mamluk bureaucratic structure in the *Mu'īd*'s opening statement. See: "Loss of Caliphate," 169.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Mu'īd*, 23.

¹⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

While the caliph is an important authority in the hierarchy of the *Mu'īd*, al-Subkī leaves no doubt that the Mamluk sultan is the true source of strength in the government. The author similarly demands the sultan to uphold justice, but includes more sharpened criticism that underscores the sultan's primary duty of making war on the enemies of faith and overseeing the military infrastructure which also included the proper distribution of *iqṭā'*s to responsible amirs who would not hoard wealth or deprive the central government of revenue. That the sultan is the chief authority is also indicated by Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's bold declaration that he is the great *imām* (*al-imām al-a'ẓam*), a title previously reserved exclusively for the Abbasid caliph, to which one modern historian has drawn attention as a unique development in the history of Islamic political theory.¹⁴⁸⁷ By keeping the sultan in the foreground as acting political leader while limiting his effective status to a position of justice and piety, al-Subkī may have been interested in resurrecting the view of the caliph as a scholar, based on the classical stipulation of treatises by al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī that the caliph be a man capable of performing *ijtihād*.¹⁴⁸⁸ Hardly able or equipped to personally handle matters of religion, it was up to the sultan to consult the religious intelligentsia and rule under their sanction rather than abandon *sharī'a* rule in favor of custom and *siyāsa*, which al-Subkī considered an exercise in futility.¹⁴⁸⁹

Like other jurists of the Mamluk period, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's view of the political hierarchy, complete with its acknowledgment of the caliph's authority and the notable recognition of the sultan as *al-imām al-a'ẓam*, supports the existing Mamluk political system that nominally recognized an Abbasid caliph at its pinnacle and demanded that he be devoted to the business of religion and to serving as a symbol of Mamluk justice. Perhaps aware that the caliph was no longer able to execute affairs of his own volition, the tone of the *Mu'īd* is harsher on the sultan as the true authority.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 196. In an earlier discussion of the *imām al-a'ẓam* title in the Mamluk context, M. Gaudet-Demombynes interpreted the sultans' use of the title as both a deliberate theft of caliphal prestige and an attempt to usurp the standing of the "greatest *imām*." Nevertheless, it was impossible to completely absorb all of the special qualities afforded to a Commander of the Faithful who many still viewed as *imām par excellence*. See: *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks d'après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative précédée d'une introduction sur l'organisation gouvernementale* (Paris, 1923), xxix; 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk wa-rusūmuhum fī Miṣr: dirāsa shāmila lil-nuzum al-siyāsiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyya, 1979), 1:29, 35-6. The traditional association of the title with the caliph did not deter later sultans such as Qāytbāy, who, along with "*khādīm al-ḥaramayn*," had "*al-imām al-a'ẓam*" engraved on his tomb inscription. See: *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum. Première partie. Égypte*. Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire t. 19 fasc. 3. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1979), 434-6.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 196; Crone, *God's Rule*, 238-40. I will elaborate on this idea below in Chapter 6.

¹⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

Ibn Khaldūn and the Collapse of Abbasid ‘aṣabiyya

A highly nuanced reading of the caliphate and its implications in Mamluk society emerges from the lauded work of the political theoretician and social historian ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn. Active in the mid-fourteenth century at various courts across North Africa and Spain, the author of the celebrated *Muqaddima* moved to Mamluk Cairo for an appointment as chief Mālikī qadi at the behest of the sultan Barqūq in 786/1384.¹⁴⁹⁰ Although Ibn Khaldūn is primarily considered a historian, his idealized views in the *Muqaddima*, supplemented by his historical and autobiographical writing are pertinent to the aims of the present chapter.¹⁴⁹¹

Ibn Khaldūn spent his final years in Egypt refining the prolegomena to his history in light of his experiences in Mamluk service.¹⁴⁹² The *Muqaddima* begins with a general discussion of human civilization, followed by a detailed discourse on bedouin life, tribal politics and the rise of what the author describes as party spirit or group solidarity (‘aṣabiyya).¹⁴⁹³ The third chapter (*bāb*) of the *Muqaddima* focuses on the nature of rule, particularly in cases of dynasty, royal authority (*mulk*), the caliphate and other ranks of government.¹⁴⁹⁴ The wealth of theory and historical example in Ibn Khaldūn’s writing facilitates an examination of the author’s excursus on the classical caliphate and its implications for contemporary Egyptian politics. His views may provide a better context for the role of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk society.

Ibn Khaldūn’s thought regards the caliphate as the pinnacle of human leadership and social organization. Much like Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Khaldūn’s ideas on justice and ideal governance come at the end of a long work which culminates in a discussion of social and political organization in the context of mankind’s need for cooperation and civilized urban society.¹⁴⁹⁵ For the author, it is the only legitimate form of government; all other forms are

¹⁴⁹⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Ta’rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa-riḥlatihi gharban wa-sharqan* (Cairo, 1951), 254; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:207-8.

¹⁴⁹¹ Exploration of Ibn Khaldūn’s views will be limited to three works: his presentation of the caliphate and secular authority (*mulk*) as expressed in the *Muqaddima*, the relevant sections of his history, *Kitāb al-‘ibār* (referenced in this dissertation as *Ta’rīkh al-‘allāma Ibn Khaldūn*), and his autobiographical work *al-Ta’rīf bi-Ibn Khaldūn*.

¹⁴⁹² Mohamed Talbi, “Ibn Khaldūn,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3:825-8.

¹⁴⁹³ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dar al-Arqam, 2001), 156-7. On ‘aṣabiyya in the *Muqaddima*, see: Linda T. Darling, “Social Cohesion (‘Asabiyya) and Justice in the Late Medieval Middle East,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 2 (2007): 329-57.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 184-333.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Al-Ṭūṣī, *Nasirean Ethics*, 187-91; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 73-5, 221-62, 417-68. The similarly influential works of al-Ṭūṣī, Ibn Khaldūn, and the fifteenth century Persian thinker Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī likely helped transmit important philosophies of government administration such as the Circle of Justice to later Ottoman intellectuals. On this point, see: Broadbridge, “Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society,” 232; Linda T. Darling, “Medieval Egyptian Society and the Concept of the Circle of Justice,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10, no. 2 (2006): 2; idem, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2013), 103-25.

condemned to ultimate failure after a protracted period of weakening.¹⁴⁹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn's understanding of the caliphate contained a powerful component of the ruler's responsibility to protect religion alongside the best interests (*maṣlaḥa*) of the public,¹⁴⁹⁷ as well as to govern the world through Islamic *sharī'a*.¹⁴⁹⁸ The work of al-Māwardī also proved an important authority for Ibn Khaldūn who used the eleventh century scholar's *Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* in his own discussions of the laws and conditions pertaining to governing functions which formerly fell under caliphal jurisdiction.¹⁴⁹⁹

For Ibn Khaldūn and his predecessors, the paramount period was encapsulated by the "rightly-guided" caliphs who reigned free of the less honorable concept of *mulk* (royal authority). Arab 'aṣabiyya demanded that rulers continue to be styled as "caliphs" which facilitated a period of coexistence between caliphate and *mulk*. While far from ideal, *mulk* imposed restraint and prevented anarchy, and in the hands of strongmen, ensured the collection of taxes and the dispatch of military expeditions.¹⁵⁰⁰

Ibn Khaldūn's presentation confirms that the Abbasids, the quintessential "destroyed dynasty," was, by the author's time, so far along the road of decay that any discussion of their political or military power whatsoever was a non-starter. Ibn Khaldūn clearly expresses his theory that the Abbasids had lost what little had remained of the caliphate by the latter half of the ninth century and although the office had persisted as *mulk* for many centuries, even that had vanished prior to the Mongol invasions.¹⁵⁰¹

Mamluk 'aṣabiyya vs. Abbasid 'aṣabiyya

Indebted to the good graces of the sultan Barqūq, Ibn Khaldūn wrote glowingly of the Mamluk legacy as protectors of Islam and expressed his belief that their military system

¹⁴⁹⁶ Gibb first studied the sequence of the *Muqaddima* chapters dealing with various forms of government and found that the entire discussion culminates in the caliphate whereupon Ibn Khaldūn launches a lengthy exposition of its supremacy. See: "The Islamic Background of Ibn Khaldūn's Political Theory," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 7, no. 1 (1933): 30-1.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 222.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 222-3, 234.

¹⁴⁹⁹ For ways in which al-Māwardī affected Ibn Khaldūn's understanding of qadis and *muftīs*, see: Morimoto Kosei, "What Ibn Khaldūn Saw: The Judiciary of Mamluk Egypt," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 111, 121. Thomas Arnold has also pointed out an interesting divergence between al-Māwardī and Ibn Khaldūn by way of the latter's clear understanding that the caliphal office had undergone great change under the dynasties that held it, and that after the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, it had lost its essential features. See: *Caliphate*, 76.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 219.

¹⁵⁰¹ For Ibn Khaldūn, the classical caliphate had disappeared among the descendants of the Umayyad caliphs Mu'āwiya and 'Abd al-Malik (whose reigns contained characteristics of true caliphate) and after a brief resurgence among the early Abbasids, disappeared definitively among the descendants of Hārūn al-Rashīd when "only the name [of the caliphate] remained." See: *Muqaddima*, 240.

possessed a unique efficacy capable of transcending the typical rise and fall of dynasties.¹⁵⁰² The *Kitāb al-‘ibar* contains a famous description of the Abbasid caliphate, mired in centuries of corruption, on the eve of the Mamluks’ rise to power. In it, the historian depicts the Abbasids as a dynasty “drowned in decadence and luxury” until its overthrow by the Tatars “who eliminated the seat of the caliphate and coveted the splendor of the lands” until God sent the Mamluks to rescue Islam, preserve order and defend the lands they had entered through slavery.¹⁵⁰³

Contemporary Politics in Cairo

Despite a lengthy treatment of the classical caliphate, Ibn Khaldūn, like others writing under the Mamluks, remains vague about the status of the institution by his own time. The *Muqaddima* contains only sparse references to the Cairo caliphs, though Ibn Khaldūn mentions them in relation to the difficulty with which dynasties are established in heterogeneous societies fraught with tension due to rival forms of *‘aṣabiyya*.¹⁵⁰⁴ He presents contemporary Egypt and Syria as the antithesis to such situations and portrays Mamluk domains as free of such disunited group feeling:

In Egypt *mulk* is established at the height of tranquility, as there are few dissenters (*khāwarij*) or tribal groups (*‘aṣā’ib*),¹⁵⁰⁵ rather there is the sultan and his subjects. Egypt’s ruling dynasty is comprised of Turkish kings and their factions who seize power consecutively among themselves, while the caliphate is named to an Abbasid descendant of the caliphs of Baghdad.¹⁵⁰⁶

Without defining the relationship or outlining a hierarchical structure that included the sultanate and caliphate, Ibn Khaldūn conveys the powerlessness of the latter while acknowledging its institutional persistence. Rule changed hands only among the Mamluks, while the sultanate and caliphate seemed to exist as two isolated phenomena in society.

In several places, Ibn Khaldūn expressed his view of dynasties that usurped power and prerogative from the Abbasid caliphs. This might reflect a truer expression of his analysis of the

¹⁵⁰² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh al-‘allāma Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1961), 5:802. See also: Ulrich Haarmann, “Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the ‘Abbasids to Modern Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20, no. 2 (1988): 182; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 228-31; Irwin, “Mamluk History and Historians,” 166.

¹⁵⁰³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta’rīkh*, 5:802. For a lengthier treatment of Ibn Khaldūn’s remarks on the Mamluk training process, see: Little, “Religion under the Mamluks,” 165-7; David Ayalon, “Mamlūkīyyat: (A) A First Attempt to Evaluate the Mamlūk Military System; (B) Ibn Khaldun’s View of the Mamlūk Phenomenon,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 340-9; idem, “The Mamlūks and Ibn Khaldūn,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980): 11-3.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 195-6.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 195. This had been the case in Syria during the age of the Israelites.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 196.

Mamluk realm that he dared not write while in their service.¹⁵⁰⁷ Ibn Khaldūn wrote that when the ruler had been usurped and forced into seclusion by others, the new dominating figure [in this case the Buyid amir], while relying on the group solidarity of the tribal supporters that brought him to power, could only hope to enjoy the fruits of the original [Arab and Abbasid] *‘aṣabiyya*:

The one who usurps authority may be among the possessors of *‘aṣabiyya* of the tribe that obtained kingship. He does not plan to take power and subvert kingship conspicuously, rather he merely appropriates its fruits (i.e. commanding the good and forbidding the wrong, binding and loosening, confirming and deposing), while giving the impression to the people of the [Abbasid] dynasty that he disposes affairs on their behalf, exercising the ruler’s orders from behind the curtain. He withdraws from the attributes of kingship and its symbols and royal titles in hope of avoiding suspicion, despite fully exercising control in his own right.¹⁵⁰⁸

The Mamluks, unlike earlier rulers who wished to distance themselves from the caliphal figureheads under their tutelage, sought a more direct absorption of Abbasid attributes in their attempt to present their capital as the new bulwark of Islamdom. Keenly aware that the caliphate had been depreciated by his own time, Ibn Khaldūn was a careful self-censor of his remarks on the Mamluk regime. In an analysis of what happens when a leader’s control is usurped by unauthorized advisors or underlings, Ibn Khaldūn mentions Turkish, Buyid, and Seljuq domination of the Abbasid caliphs, along with the eunuch Kāfūr’s (d. 357/968) usurpation of two Ikhshīdīd princes in tenth century Egypt.¹⁵⁰⁹ The author’s ideas on the child rulers of weakened dynasties have bearing on the later Qalawunīd sultans, many of whom were adolescents subject to the whims of their fathers’ amirs.¹⁵¹⁰ To be sure, there are parallels with the Mamluk context in regard to the regime’s seizure of Abbasid prerogatives. It is unsurprising that Ibn Khaldūn avoids direct comparison with the contemporary situation of Egypt and instead praises his Mamluk patrons.

The *Muqaddima* avoided controversial topics in recent history, such as the Mamluk takeover from the popular Ayyubids and the rise of Barqūq and the Circassian slaves at the expense of the entrenched Baḥrī Turkish line of Qalawunīd sultans supported by Mamluk custom and tradition. Addressing such topics to illustrate theories of usurpation could prove just as seditious as an unflattering interpretation of Mamluk protection of Abbasid survivors. Instead, Ibn

¹⁵⁰⁷ Haarmann, “Injustice of the Turks,” 62. More generally on this theme, see: Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (West Port, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952), 7-37.

¹⁵⁰⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 218.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 217-8.

¹⁵¹⁰ Ibid. See also: Jo Van Steenberg, “‘Is Anyone My Guardian...?’ Mamlūk Under-age Rule and the Later Qalāwūnīds,” *Al-Masāq* 19, no. 1 (2007): 55-65.

Khaldūn downplayed the significance of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo and presented a positive image of Mamluk deeds done solely for the sake of Islam.

Imamate of the Sultan

Sections of the *Muqaddima* and *Kitāb al-‘ibar* move towards a legitimization of Mamluk Egypt and the position of its sultan. Ibn Khaldūn understood the classical caliphate as substitution for the Prophet, and wrote that *imām* and caliph were synonymous terms for the preserver of religion and the person responsible for political leadership. The author of the *Muqaddima* observed that in recent times, “sultan” could be added to a list of terms recognizing the executor of duties traditionally carried out by the *imām* or caliph.¹⁵¹¹ He also notes that in some cases, *bay‘a* could be given to anyone who seized power.¹⁵¹²

To clear the way for a jurisprudential recognition of the Mamluk sultan as *imām*, Ibn Khaldūn eliminated Qurayshī descent as a stipulation.¹⁵¹³ In line with his theories of decline, the prestige and *‘aṣabiyya* of the Quraysh had grown obsolete as the caliphs grew too feeble for office and non-Arabs surpassed them.¹⁵¹⁴ Perhaps wishing to bring reality in line with his theories, Ibn Khaldūn demanded that the leader necessarily required membership in the group with the strongest *‘aṣabiyya* to better protect the common interests of Islamic society.¹⁵¹⁵ If the argument was that Qurayshī descent was a source of *baraka*, the *sharī‘a* was simply unconcerned with providing blessings in its mandates; rather its concern was public interest, which defined by Ibn Khaldūn, was little more than regard for *‘aṣabiyya*.¹⁵¹⁶ Thus for Ibn Khaldūn, when a ruler possesses legitimacy, he has the right to obedience. Ibn Khaldūn sees the Mamluk sultan as qualified for leadership in that he had sufficient knowledge of Islam (by virtue of access to the *‘ulamā’*), was free and able to act, and was a member of the group with the strongest *‘aṣabiyya*.

That the caliph or ruler must be free to act was an important stipulation, which included those who may be restricted by imprisonment and suppressed by usurpers. Specifically in the instance that some of the caliph’s “helpers” turn the tables and take power at his expense:

Supervision then shifts to the one who has gained power (*al-mustawālī*), for if he proceeds according to the precepts of religion, justice, and praiseworthy policies, his

¹⁵¹¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 223.

¹⁵¹² Ibid.

¹⁵¹³ Ibid., 225-7 (On Qurayshī descent).

¹⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 226. Little wonder that the Ottoman Turks later cultivated enduring respect for Ibn Khaldūn and his views on Qurayshī descent. See: H. A. R. Gibb, “Luṭfī Paşa on the Ottoman Caliphate,” *Oriens* 15 (1962): 287-95.

¹⁵¹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 227.

¹⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 226-7.

decrees are permitted, and if not, the Muslims must seek assistance from one who will remove his hand and repel the malady he has inflicted, until the reinstatement of the caliph's abilities.¹⁵¹⁷

That the community must refer to the one who imprisoned the caliph, reflects the notion that such a state of affairs was acceptable to the *'ulamā'* so long as Islam appeared to be served, prayer was upheld, and qadis could be appointed to make rulings and counsel the ruler. The Mamluk sultan was formally the caliph's deputy, while the caliph himself remained in confinement. The arrangement seemed to satisfy Ibn Khaldūn so long as the sultan acted justly and in accordance with Islamic *sharī'a*.

Thus with the term "*sulṭān*" as a functional synonym of *khalīfa* and *imām*, the foregoing of Qurayshī descent and the rejection of a restricted caliph, all signs point to Ibn Khaldūn's theoretical acceptance of the Mamluk sultan Barqūq as an *imām* who ruled through *mulk*, while the caliphate existed in an undefined capacity, presumably until the time when a true caliphate in line with the idealized view of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn could be restored.

Historical presentation of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

In *Kitāb al-ībar*, the chronicle adjoined to the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn's narrative is broken into sections arranged with separate headings devoted to battles, coups, and affairs of great importance.¹⁵¹⁸ Despite an awareness of the marginal role of the caliphate by his own time, Ibn Khaldūn afforded the Abbasids of Cairo significance enough in his historical presentation, devoting no fewer than five breakaway sections to discuss events of interest, particularly deaths and successions in the Abbasid family.¹⁵¹⁹ In these sections on the Cairo caliphs, Ibn Khaldūn covers the seven Abbasid family members of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who received *bay'a* in Egypt down to al-Mutawakkil. His decision to order events around the Abbasid caliphate, as well as separate passages devoted to its incumbents, may have been an attempt to follow the conventions of earlier historians that closely followed caliphal milestones and the family succession.

In his coverage of the investitures of the first two caliphs by Baybars, Ibn Khaldūn offers little indication of the significance of the reestablishment of the caliphate in Egypt, although he describes the lands as "destitute without the caliphate until Baybars renewed and reconstructed its

¹⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 225.

¹⁵¹⁸ For some remarks on Ibn Khaldūn's value as a historical source, see: Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā'ūn* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970), 75-6.

¹⁵¹⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh*, 5: 825-7, 893, 947.

throne.”¹⁵²⁰ Ibn Khaldūn’s treatment of the Mamluks ends during the 791/1389 coup of the amirs Yalbughā and Minṭāsh who jointly ousted Barqūq. Upon gaining prominence over his partner, Minṭāsh used the caliph and chief qadis to legitimize himself by forcing them to sign a document declaring Barqūq an outlaw and enemy of Islam.¹⁵²¹ Ibn Khaldūn, Mālikī qadi at the time, chafed at the experience, feeling himself little better than an impotent caliph.¹⁵²²

Over a decade later, after Barqūq’s death in 801/1399, Temūr invaded Syria and later granted amnesty to Damascus on 11 Rajab 803/25 February 1401. Ibn Khaldūn was dispatched to meet the conqueror as part of an embassy sent by the late Mamluk sultan’s son and successor, al-Nāṣir Faraj.¹⁵²³ An Abbasid claimant accompanied the delegation from Cairo and in Temūr’s presence, began pressing an independent claim counter to the reigning caliph al-Mutawakkil in Cairo. Turning to Ibn Khaldūn for a professional opinion, Temūr questioned the scholar on his legal and historical views on the caliphate and Abbasid legitimacy.¹⁵²⁴

The unnamed Abbasid prince complained to Temūr that al-Mutawakkil lacked sufficient legal support (*mustanad*) to justify his claim and requested intervention to obtain the caliphate on legal grounds. Promising justice, Temūr summoned a group of jurists and qadis and invited Ibn Khaldūn to present his own opinion. Claiming a stronger genealogical right to the family office, the Abbasid also cited a prophetic tradition proposing that the caliphate “belonged to the Abbasids as long as the world endured.”¹⁵²⁵ Ibn Khaldūn and his colleagues roundly dismissed the ḥadīth prompting Temūr to request elaboration as to why the caliphate had been an exclusive Abbasid prerogative to begin with.

Ibn Khaldūn explains that leadership had been in dispute among Muslims since the death of the Prophet, and after a brief summation of Sunni, Shiite, and Kharijite positions, discusses the formulation and spread of official Abbasid propaganda (*da‘wa*). With the advent of the first Abbasid caliph Abū al-‘Abbās al-Saffāḥ (132-6/749-54), the Abbasids and their supporters, commanding irresistible *‘aṣabiyya*, demanded obedience from all other groups.¹⁵²⁶ Rule remained in the Abbasid family “either by designation or choice by the people of the age” until the last

¹⁵²⁰ Ibid., 5:825-8.

¹⁵²¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta‘rīf*, 329-31; Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Ṭarkhān (Cairo, 1971), 11:360-1; Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘ al-zuhūr fī waqā‘i‘ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982-4), 1:2:417. See also: Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks: XIIIe - XVIe siècle; une expérience du pouvoir dans l’Islam médiéval* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014), 124.

¹⁵²² Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta‘rīf*, 330-1.

¹⁵²³ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:208-9.

¹⁵²⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta‘rīf*, 374-6.

¹⁵²⁵ Ibid., 374-5.

¹⁵²⁶ Ibid., 376.

caliph of Baghdad. Ibn Khaldūn ends his remarks with an endorsement of the legacy of the Mamluk caliphate project and the status quo in Cairo:

When Hülāgū took possession of Baghdad and put [al-Musta‘šim] to death, his kinsmen dispersed. Some took up residence in Egypt, including Aḥmad al-Ḥākim, from the progeny of al-Rāshid, who was appointed to office in Cairo by al-Zāhir Baybars with the concurrence of the military electorate (*ahl al-ḥall wa-al-‘aqd min al-jund*) and the jurists. Authority (*amr*) has been transmitted in his house down to the present one who is in Cairo; no deviation from this is known.¹⁵²⁷

Perhaps appreciative of the reply, Temür promptly ejected the Abbasid prince from his presence.¹⁵²⁸ Through his statements on the enduring legacy of the Abbasid caliphate Ibn Khaldūn protected Mamluk supremacy and defended the tradition of the caliphate while attempting to appear diplomatic in the ominous presence of Temür and the ideological and military challenges he posed.

In short, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain Ibn Khaldūn’s explicit position on the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo in light of his indifference and careful self-censorship. There is no doubt that he understood Abbasid *‘aṣabiyya* to have been destroyed by the late ninth century and the vestiges of it which he observed in Cairo, while devoid of true power, were a potent reminder of tradition and legacy. He acknowledged the reigning Abbasid al-Mutawakkil as caliph in name, and even emphasized the caliphate’s traditional importance in conversation with Temür. Nevertheless, he curbed his discussion of its true lack of political relevance, perhaps careful of its controversial nature among his Mamluk hosts. While longing for government to return to an Arabo-Muslim, Rāshidūn-style caliphate, he believed in the legitimate authority and entitlement of the group with the strongest *‘aṣabiyya*: the Mamluks in his own time. As a pragmatist he saw the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo as acutely irrelevant pageantry which pandered to an outmoded *‘aṣabiyya* yet one which still mattered to the designs of dominant Mamluk group solidarity. While praising the Mamluks directly in his *Kitāb al-‘ibar* and indirectly in the *Muqaddima*, he legitimized their government while subliminally pointing to its flaws in comparison with the classical caliphate.

Ibn Khaldūn’s thought expands upon two important themes: the gradual erosion of Abbasid *‘aṣabiyya* and the need for a true caliphate. There is some contradiction in this presentation. As a historian, he flatters the Mamluks by casting them as rescuers of a corrupt Abbasid dynasty in decline. He likewise projects acceptance of the notion that the Abbasid caliph formally delegates the sultan with all of the caliphal prerogatives. It is unclear if he thought that

¹⁵²⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵²⁸ Ibid.

the Mamluks were sent by God to restore the caliphate, or whether they absorbed and remade it in their own image with the Mamluk sultan as acting *imām* of the Muslim community.

It can be safely argued that Ibn Khaldūn's admiration for the Mamluk system came complete with its element of being blessed by Abbasid legitimacy. While his pragmatic impulse may have been to ignore the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo, its place in tradition and its significance to the Mamluk program forced him to accept it as part of a functioning whole and he relegated it to its place in the background. The *Muqaddima* contains Ibn Khaldūn's longing for the resurrection of an Arabo-Islamic *'aṣabiyya* to revive the classical Rāshidūn-style caliphate, and like Ibn Taymiyya, the author interpreted the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo as a symbolic placeholder until the time that such a situation might arise.

Islamic sentimentality, cultural affinity, and regard for the Mamluks stopped Ibn Khaldūn from arguing that the contemporary caliphate failed to serve a purpose. Instead, he tiptoed around it, acknowledged its nominal nature, and moved on. It had no bearing on his theories and, having no wish to discredit it, he merely chose not to engage it without explicitly advocating that it had no place in politics.¹⁵²⁹

Al-Qalqashandī and the New Abbasid Capital

The scholar and chancery secretary Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) is best known to modern scholars for his works devoted to the secretarial genre (*adab al-kitāb*), notably his scribal encyclopedia *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* which, on the basis of its contents, was likely prepared as a manual for would-be scribal secretaries to learn classical document composition.¹⁵³⁰ After the completion of the *Ṣubḥ* in about 814-5/1412, al-Qalqashandī spent his last six years preparing a shorter compilation of its documents pertaining to the caliphate, in part, for the edification of the reigning Abbasid caliph of Cairo, Dāwūd al-Mu'taḍid II (816-45/1414-41).¹⁵³¹ Entitled *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*, the author prefaced the collection with a brief treatise on the caliphate and a caliphal history covering the men that had held the office from the days of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq down to al-Mu'taḍid II of Cairo.¹⁵³² Providing, it seems, the caliph, as

¹⁵²⁹ This contention stands in opposition to Ann Lambton's unreferenced claim that in regard to the Abbasid caliph of Cairo, Ibn Khaldūn "flatly declared that he was not a caliph." See: *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 138.

¹⁵³⁰ In preparing the work, al-Qalqashandī made use of previous works of the genre including two noteworthy specimens: *al-Ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf* by Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī and the *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf* of Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh. See: Anne F. Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions in the Mamluk Sultanate," *Annales islamologiques* 41 (2007): 105.

¹⁵³¹ C. E. Bosworth, "al-Qalqashandī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:510. On al-Qalqashandī, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:149-50.

¹⁵³² Much of the same material is included in volumes 5, 6, 9, and 10 of the *Ṣubḥ*.

well as aspiring courtiers, with a holistic view of the caliphate, both the *Ṣubḥ* and the *Ma'āthir* approach everything from the etymology and grammatical history of the Arabic word *khalīfa* to the history of titulature chosen by the caliphs.¹⁵³³

Al-Qalqashandī's *Ma'āthir* reflects on a century and a half of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, flattering al-Mu'taḍid II and his recent ancestors while instructing the caliph in history, propriety, and the traditions of his office. Al-Qalqashandī names the caliph *al-imām al-a'ẓam* and applies the title to several of the caliphs.¹⁵³⁴ The author recognizes a distinct place for the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, and although he treats the reigning caliph with a degree of pomp, he does not seem to over-emphasize the reality of the caliphate's role in his theoretical writing, which drew heavily on al-Māwardī's *Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*.¹⁵³⁵ If al-Qalqashandī's image of the Abbasid caliph seems exaggerated, one must remember that the work is dedicated to an incumbent Abbasid caliph and some embellishment was only fitting.

Al-Qalqashandī draws attention to the historic position of the caliphate, praising the line of al-'Abbās for tirelessly carrying the burdens of imposing the *sharī'a*, to be rewarded by the assurance that the caliphate would remain in the Abbasid family. The author claims that the presence of the caliph maintained uninterrupted support for the *sharī'a* until the Mongols, and ascribes to it a legacy of defending religion, property, and Islamic territory while maintaining public and private order.¹⁵³⁶

Egypt as the Caliphal Seat

Al-Qalqashandī opens the *Ma'āthir* with praise to God for bringing the Abbasid caliphate to the Mamluk realm which he identifies as the Heartland of Islam (*Bayḍat al-Islām*). The notion that Egypt had emerged as the heart of the Sunni world was an important theme for religious scholars as well as bureaucrats, who understood the Mamluk sultanate as having attained distinction over other regimes, due in large part to the transformation of Egypt into the abode of the Abbasid caliphate, a development which entered the Mamluk regime into an advanced stage of empire as a foundation for Islamdom at large.¹⁵³⁷ We may venture to suggest that the attitude

¹⁵³³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:444-7; idem, *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964), 1:8-12, 17-29.

¹⁵³⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 1:1. See also: 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Cairo, 1987), 7.

¹⁵³⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 1:29-80.

¹⁵³⁶ Ibid., 1:2.

¹⁵³⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 1:31; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 1:1. See also: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 372; Muhsin Jassim al-Musawi, "Vindicating a Profession or a Personal Career? Al-Qalqashandī's *Maqāmah* in Context," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (2003): 134. Before al-Qalqashandī, the scribal secretary Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umārī identified Cairo, because of the presence of the caliph and the righteous scholars, with

of al-Qalqashandī approximates the modern phenomenon of “civic pride” in his residence in Mamluk Cairo, the effective successor to Abbasid Baghdad:

[The caliphate’s] pavilion was entrusted to Egypt and thus was no longer in need. [The Abbasid caliphate] set down its baggage and walking staff at [Egypt’s] elegant courtyard and [Egypt] offered its shade and became the abode of the imamate (*Dār al-Imāma*) and the dome of tranquility (*Qubbat al-Salām*) for it was known that Egypt was the best destination and that [the caliphate] had no further need of Baghdad.¹⁵³⁸

The author’s choice of epithets of two famous Iraqi cities, the Abbasid political capital of Baghdad (*Dār al-Salām*) and a major hub of religious learning in Baṣra (*Qubbat al-Salām*) is no coincidence as he asserts that Mamluk Cairo, with its Abbasid caliph, has succeeded them both and eclipsed their significance. Nevertheless, al-Qalqashandī’s characterization of the Abbasid caliphate as a wandering traveler or bedouin that set down its belongings is more reminiscent of an honored guest than a lost king returning to reclaim his kingdom.

Elsewhere in al-Qalqashandī’s works, the author encourages Cairo to assume its rightful place alongside the other prestigious Islamic capitals: Medina of the Rāshidūn caliphs, Umayyad Damascus, and Abbasid Baghdad.¹⁵³⁹ The author observes that ever since the Abbasid caliph al-Ḥākim had been settled in Cairo’s al-Kabsh district by al-Ashraf Khalīl in 690/1291, God had allowed traces of the Prophet’s legacy to remain in the kingdom.¹⁵⁴⁰

Al-Qalqashandī on Titulary

Al-Qalqashandī explains persisting Abbasid practices in Cairo including the use of official epithets (*alqāb*) by the Rāshidūn caliphs such as ‘*abd Allāh*’ in official correspondence in which the caliph wished to present himself as “God’s servant.” He also mentions the Fatimid *laqab*, *walī Allāh*, which the Abbasids of Cairo adopted for official correspondence to announce

such epithets as “*umm al-mamālik*,” “*ḥaḍīrat al-bilād*,” and “*dār al-khilāfa*.” See: *Al-Ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf*, ed. Samir al-Droubi (Karak, 1992), 2:247. The theme of Egypt’s preeminence as seat of the caliphate is also picked up later in the fifteenth century by al-Suyūṭī (see discussion below in Chapter 4) and Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī (d. 888/1483) who identifies Egypt, thanks to the presence of the Abbasid caliph, as heartland of Islam. See: Haarmann, “Injustice of the Turks,” 63-4; idem, “Al-Maqrizi, the Master, and Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudsī, the Disciple—Whose Historical Writing Can Claim More Topicality and Modernity?” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 149-65. See also: Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 9; Broadbridge, “Diplomatic Conventions,” 101, 106; Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm Khulī, *al-‘Ulamā’ fī Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M.* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 2014), 69-71.

¹⁵³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 1:3.

¹⁵³⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:263-5; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:220-4.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:265.

that their documents came from God's servant and intimate (*min 'abd Allāh wa-waliyyihi*).¹⁵⁴¹ The caliphs of Cairo likewise made use of the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* popularized by the second caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), as well as the title *imām*, which al-Qalqashandī connected to Shiite origins and which the Cairo Abbasids continued as a legacy of their Baghdad predecessors.¹⁵⁴² Unlike the Rāshidūn and most of the Umayyads, the Abbasids of Baghdad had begun choosing unique eschatological titles such as al-Manṣūr, al-Hādī, and al-Mutawakkil for individual caliphs.¹⁵⁴³ The distinct regnal names were thought to have held auspicious significance for each caliph, and tradition dictated that names should be unique and never repeated. It was only after the line moved to Cairo that the Abbasids chose to reprise several names of earlier caliphs beginning with Aḥmad ibn al-Zāhir, who chose the name of his brother al-Mustansir of Iraq.¹⁵⁴⁴ The second Cairo caliph chose the Fatimid *laqab* al-Ḥākim.¹⁵⁴⁵ This practice seemed to become the norm for the Egyptian caliphs including the contemporary al-Mu'taḍid, who was the third Abbasid and second Cairo caliph of that name.¹⁵⁴⁶ The Cairo caliphs also consistently utilized theophoric regnal titles which included the appendages *billāh*, *bi-amr Allāh* or *'alā 'l-lāh*, a practice al-Qalqashandī ascribed to the Baghdad caliph al-Mu'taṣim billāh (218-27/833-42).¹⁵⁴⁷

Interested as he was in the titular nomenclature of high office, al-Qalqashandī considers "*khalīfa*" as the highest title among the military class or lords of the sword (*arbāb al-sayf*), denoting a great leader who upholds the affairs of the *umma*.¹⁵⁴⁸ In his discussion of the delegation of office (*wilāya*) al-Qalqashandī writes that Abbasid regnal names were selected in

¹⁵⁴¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:122; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 1:20-1. Al-Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ*, 6:431) reveals that at the time he compiled the *Ṣubḥ*, the caliph al-Mutawakkil I, or those representing him in the chancery, signed his name to a letter for the deputy of Syria thusly: "From the slave of God and His *walī*, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad, the *imām* al-Mutawakkil 'alā 'l-lāh, Commander of the Faithful."

¹⁵⁴² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:475-6; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 1:21, 26-8. Use of the title *imām* may have been a conscious effort by the early Abbasids to compete with 'Alid claims to leadership.

¹⁵⁴³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:477; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 1:20-1. According to Ibn Khaldūn, Abbasid regnal names (*alqāb*) were often selected to preserve the caliphs' given names against abuse upon common tongues. The practice was later adopted by the Fatimids and revived by the Abbasids of Cairo. See: *Muqaddima*, 259-60.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:260.

¹⁵⁴⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 1:23, 2:117.

¹⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 1:24.

¹⁵⁴⁷ 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid points out that while caliphal titles in the Mamluk period tended to include the Arabic word for God, "Allāh," the titles chosen by the Mamluk sultans instead included the Arabic word for religion, "al-Dīn" (i.e. Rukn al-Dīn, Sayf al-Dīn, Nāṣir al-Dīn, etc.). See: *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:36.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:444.

part to announce the splendor of the caliph and elevate his position as leader of the community.¹⁵⁴⁹

Among the names surviving to Mamluk times that the caliph could bestow upon his *de jure* subordinates, al-Qalqashandī identified a quintet of titles, arranged from highest to lowest rank, made by annexing the caliphal sobriquet “Commander of the Faithful” to a noun implying nearness or sincerity. The intent of such compound titles was to lend prestige to the highest officials by asserting their intimacy with the holiest figure in Islamdom.¹⁵⁵⁰ The first, and most important, was *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn*, reserved for sultans and meaning one who shared the caliph’s authority and power.¹⁵⁵¹ The more ambiguous *khalīl amīr al-mu’minīn* was, according to the author of the *Ṣubḥ* and some of his predecessors, a title given to the sultan’s children or other miscellaneous rulers, often in distant realms but suggesting an intimate bond with the caliph.¹⁵⁵² Among the highest honors a Mamluk deputy could hope to obtain was the title *‘aḍud amīr al-mu’minīn*, which implied that he leant his support as a pillar to the Commander of the Faithful.¹⁵⁵³ Additionally, two slightly lower titles, both of which connote swords, *sayf amīr al-mu’minīn* and *ḥusām amīr al-mu’minīn* were bestowed on Mamluk amirs as men of the sword. As for caliphal titles for the bureaucratic and religious classes, or men of the pen and men of the turban, qadis and ‘ulamā’ could attain the titles “Intimate of the Commander of the Faithful” (*walī amīr al-mu’minīn*), “Sincere Companion of the Commander of the Faithful” (*khālīṣatu amīr al-mu’minīn*) and “Elite Friend of the Commander of the Faithful” (*ṣafīyyu* or *ṣafwat amīr al-mu’minīn*) among their honors.¹⁵⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 9:263

¹⁵⁵⁰ The appearance of “*amīr al-mu’minīn*” as a suffix attached to formal titles used by the Mamluk class represents a clear manifestation of caliphal prestige and the symbolic magnitude retained by the office in this period. See: Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxi.

¹⁵⁵¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:47, 65, 108, 113. On the *amīr al-mu’minīn* compound titles, see also: Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 187-9; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta’rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8), 2:95; Ḥasan Al-Bāshā, *al-Alqāb al-Islāmīyya fī al-ta’rīkh wa-al-wathā’iq wa-al-athār* (Cairo, 1978), 204-8; Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:35. I also discuss *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn* in Chapter 5.

¹⁵⁵² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:47, 108, 113-4; Al-Bāshā, *Alqāb*, 200-1; Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:35. The title was used for the sons of Mamluk rulers. The dedication for Ibn al-Nafīs’s treatise *Risālat al-a’ḍā’*, likely composed for either a member of Qalāwūn’s entourage or perhaps one of his sons, includes *khalīl amīr al-mu’minīn* among the honorific *alqāb* listed in praise of the dedicatee. See: *Risālat al-a’ḍā’: ma’a dirāsa ḥawla Ibn al-Nafīs wa-manhajih wa-ibdā’ātih*, (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1991), 87-8. I thank Nahyan Fancy for calling my attention to this.

¹⁵⁵³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:108-9, 113-4. See also: Annemarie Schimmel, “Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt during the Later Mamluk Period” *Islamic Studies* 4 (1965): 360.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. See also: Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 187, 189; Al-Bāshā, *Alqāb*, 199-200, 202-3. However, such titles may not have been strictly limited to bureaucrats and religious scholars. David Nicolle has found evidence that the *khālīṣat amīr al-mu’minīn* title was used on an inlaid bronze candlestick base dating to thirteenth century Mosul, possibly dedicated to the atabeg amir Mas’ūd ibn Arslan Shāh. See: “The

Echoing the sentiments of his bureaucratic forerunners al-‘Umarī and Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh,¹⁵⁵⁵ al-Qalqashandī attached considerable importance to the traditional caliphal investiture even as late as the Mamluk period, by describing the position of the sultanate as analogous to “a delegated vizirate and [declaring] that it consisted of a combination of (al-Māwardī’s) *imārat al-istīlā*’ with the *wizārat al-tafwīd*.”¹⁵⁵⁶ In al-Māwardī’s conception, the *wazīr al-tafwīd*, who enjoyed omnipotent authority to act on the caliph’s behalf, cleared the way for the position of the *amīr al-umarā*’ to usurp power and leave the tenth and eleventh century caliphs of Baghdad as mere figureheads. Although the Mamluk sultan resembled an *amīr al-umarā*’ in practice, an important difference was the legal veneer his entire government received by virtue of the caliph’s general delegation of authority.¹⁵⁵⁷

Al-Qalqashandī includes his own treatise on the caliphate in the *Ma’āthir* which drew on al-Māwardī. Among other topics, al-Qalqashandī covered the obligatory nature of the caliphate, the conditions required for one to hold it, the methods through which *bay’a* is established, as well as the mutual responsibilities that the caliph and his Muslim subjects could expect from each other.¹⁵⁵⁸

Like other contemporaries, al-Qalqashandī may have been skittish about describing his own political reality in the fourteenth century,¹⁵⁵⁹ and instead revisited al-Māwardī’s classical exposition of the caliphate filtered through an eleventh century Baghdad lens amidst the latter days of the Buyid usurpation of the Abbasid caliphate. Al-Qalqashandī, while celebrating the legacy of the caliphate, concedes that the office had lost power over the years, compared to its earlier prestige and grandeur.

Iconography of a Military Elite: Military Figures on an Early 13th Century Candlestick,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014) [in press].

¹⁵⁵⁵ For the comments of al-‘Umarī and Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh on the nature of caliphal sanction (whether in the form of investiture deeds or *mubāya’a*) in the Mamluk period, see: Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 138-40.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Sourdel, “Khalīfah.” See also: al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 11:72-3.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxix; Linda S. Northrup, “The Baḥrī Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 255.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Among the earlier authors who wrote on the imamate, al-Qalqashandī referenced the work of Shāfi‘ī scholars including Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī (d. 578/1182) and Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277). Al-Qalqashandī often presents various opinions on an issue without offering his own. He defers to the views of al-Māwardī on controversial issues such as the obligatory nature of the caliphate or the question of Qurayshī descent.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Urbain Vermeulen, “La *bay’a* califale dans le *Subḥ* d’al-Qalqashandī: L’aspect théorique,” in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 2, *Proceedings of the 4th and 5th International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1995 and 1996*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 300-1.

In regard to the possible influence of al-Māwardī on al-Qalqashandī, it is worth exercising caution here as societal outlooks in the Buyid and Mamluk periods did not share the same ethos. Despite some surface-level similarities, the powerless Abbasid caliph kept by the Shiite Buyids of the tenth century was not the same as his equally powerless Mamluk-era counterpart. In the earlier case, al-Māwardī and his like-minded colleagues believed the Buyids to be a temporary annoyance that would be swept away by the return of the classical caliphate. While military rulers essentially used the caliph for their own legitimating purposes in Sunni Mamluk Egypt, many of the expectations and institutions of society had evolved in a different way.¹⁵⁶⁰ Indeed, al-Qalqashandī's scribal encyclopedias were also heavily influenced by the earlier work of al-'Umarī, and in the nearly sixty years between their deaths, many Mamluk offices had changed considerably. Both authors tended to describe idealized practices at the expense of reality. However, at least one portion of the *Ṣubḥ*, composed just after the accession of the caliph al-Musta'īn to the sultanate in 815/1412, demonstrates al-Qalqashandī's belief (or perhaps hope) that the Cairo caliphate had opened a new and exciting chapter which might prove to be permanent. He observes that until the arrest of the sultan Faraj in Syria that year, the caliphs of Cairo had done little more than delegate control over affairs to the Mamluks. With the sultanate of al-Musta'īn, however, "[the caliph] became the caliph of the age in the matter of the caliphate in regard to writing contracts, assigning *iqṭā's*, *taqlīds*, *tawqī's* and other correspondence. His name [was mentioned] alone in the *khuṭba* and struck on dinars and dirhams [...]"¹⁵⁶¹

Whether grounded in reason or religion, al-Qalqashandī bases his discussion of the necessity of the imamate, like the conditions for the imamate, on earlier scholars.¹⁵⁶² He closely follows al-Māwardī's seven stipulations that the *imām* possess probity, knowledge sufficient for *ijtihād*, functioning faculties of sight, speech, and hearing, freedom, the ability to offer judgment, courage, and be of Qurayshī descent. Al-Qalqashandī himself does not explicitly demand that the caliph or *imām* be of Qurayshī stock, but rather restates al-Māwardī's unswerving position in favor of it as well as the opinion of the Shāfi'ī scholar Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī (d. 578/1182) who had posited the existing opinion that if there were no Qurayshīs from which to select an *imām*, a man

¹⁵⁶⁰ I thank Ovamir Anjum for sharing this observation via email. See also: Holt, "Structure of Government," 52-3; Haarmann, "Injustice of the Turks," 63; Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions," 105-6. For comment on Roy Mottahedeh's discussion of loyalty in the Buyid period in comparison with the Mamluk period, see: Robert Irwin, "Factions in Medieval Egypt," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1986): 237.

¹⁵⁶¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:275-6.

¹⁵⁶² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 1:29-30. For al-Māwardī conditions for the imamate see: al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭānīya*, 5-24.

from the Kināna tribe would suffice, or else any man from the lineage of the prophet Ismā‘īl and then finally, if need be, a non-Arab (*‘ajam*).¹⁵⁶³ Al-Rifā‘ī also argued that the *imām* need not necessarily be from the Hashimite clan since the first three Rāshidūn caliphs had not been from the Prophet’s clan.¹⁵⁶⁴ Al-Qalqashandī does, however, recognize a special position for the descendants of al-‘Abbās and acknowledges them as the rightful holders of the caliphate for all time.¹⁵⁶⁵

In regard to the men who had the power to elect the caliph in his own time, al-Qalqashandī recognizes those with decision-making power to be members of the *‘ulamā’*, leaders of the military establishment and other notables (*wujūh*) from among the people who gather to select an *imām* capable of satisfying al-Māwardī’s criteria.¹⁵⁶⁶ If not for the “people of authority” identified as “those in authority among you” (*man ulū al-amr minkum*) in the Qur’ān (4:59), al-Qalqashandī believes there could be no legitimate contract (*‘aqd*) between the caliph and the community.¹⁵⁶⁷

Al-Qalqashandī’s brief treatise in the *Ma’āthir* provides an overview of theoretical aspects of the *bay‘a* and the caliphal succession reminiscent of the author’s discussion of the *bay‘a* in his fifth chapter of the *Ṣubḥ*.¹⁵⁶⁸ In discussing the historic legality of the *bay‘a*, al-Qalqashandī appeals again to Shāfi‘ī authorities by recapitulating that the contract between the caliph and members of the community is best fulfilled when the people who control affairs assemble to witness the *mubāya‘a* ceremony.¹⁵⁶⁹ As in previous examples given by the author, the number of assembled members is not set, nor is it mandatory for all the distant religious and military notables to personally provide their assent. It is merely enough for someone in a distant province to hear news of the investiture to make his obedience and allegiance binding upon him.¹⁵⁷⁰ This is why news of the investiture of a new Abbasid caliph or Mamluk sultan in Cairo was also sent to the important cities of Syria.

Following al-Māwardī and Ibn Jamā‘a, al-Qalqashandī covers the mutual obligations between the *imām*-caliph and the people, namely the caliph protecting religion, the sanctity of the community, carrying out *jihād* and imposing subjugated “protected peoples” (*dhimmī*) status on

¹⁵⁶³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 1:37-9. Al-Qalqashandī himself had trained to become a Shāfi‘ī qadī and refers to his “Shāfi‘ī masters” in his discussion. See: Bosworth, “al-Qalqashandī,” 509.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 1:39

¹⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 1:2.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 1:39-45.

¹⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 1:47-8

¹⁵⁶⁸ On the selection of the caliph, see: *Ṣubḥ*, 9:252. On the *bay‘a* in general, see: *Ṣubḥ*, 9:273-319. See also: Vermeulen, “La *bay‘a* califale,” 296-300.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 1:42-5.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 1:44-5.

unbelievers, upholding *ḥudūd* punishments, as well as collecting and distributing state taxes and alms.¹⁵⁷¹ In return for offering services and upholding the guarantees of the leadership, the caliph could expect unwavering obedience from the people which included their support in all matters of religion and *jihād*.¹⁵⁷²

The seventh and final section (*faṣl*) of the treatise discusses ten functions (*waṣāʾif*) al-Qalqashandī identifies as having been associated with the caliphate of earlier times.¹⁵⁷³ The section acknowledges a decline in the prerogatives of the caliphate by the fourteenth century in light of the formal caliphal designation of authority to the Mamluk sultan.¹⁵⁷⁴ The duties again evoke al-Māwardī's discussion of 1) the wazirate (both the wazir of delegation (*al-tafwīḍ*) and the “non-contractual” wazir (*al-tanfīḍ*) who carried out the caliph's will), 2) the two kinds of imarate concerning usurpation and *ad hoc* recognition (*imārat al-istikāʾ* and *imārat al-istilāʾ*), 3) fighting polytheists, apostates, transgressors and other combatants, 4) the judiciary – upholding the ordinances of *sharīʿa* and appointing qadis, 5) redress of grievances court (*al-maẓālim*), 6) the establishment of an official to maintain genealogical lists of *sayyids* and other notable descendants entitled to receive stipends, 7) upholding the five daily prayers, 8) organizing *ḥajj* leadership for pilgrimage to the holy cities, 9) distributing alms, 10) market inspection (*ḥisba*), a general application of the concept of enjoining good and forbidding evil, all formerly associated with the caliphate. By the Mamluk period, such functions of leadership fell within the jurisdiction of the sultan who appointed various office holders as he saw fit. Nevertheless, in the context of the classical caliphate, the duties imply that the caliphate encapsulated a great deal more than the single man who held the office. It was an entire apparatus designed for enabling coherent rule. Thus, the amirate, wazirate, and the networks of qadis working for the state were all part of the “Caliphate” writ large.¹⁵⁷⁵ Indeed the idea that the caliphate or sultanate went *beyond* the individual office holder continued throughout the Mamluk period and appears with some frequency in Mamluk literature.¹⁵⁷⁶ The caliphate and later sultanate consisted of lower levels through which the ruler publicly displayed authority and upheld his end of the contract by presiding at *maẓālim* courts or delegating a *muḥtasib* which allowed the ruler to ensure that important duties were carried out either by himself in the period when the community was tiny or

¹⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 1:59-63.

¹⁵⁷² Ibid., 1:62-4.

¹⁵⁷³ Ibid., 1:74-80.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 1:74.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:273-4.

¹⁵⁷⁶ See Chapter 6 below.

later on by appointees when the community had developed into a vast empire. Caliphate implied an upholding of responsibilities and sub-responsibilities.¹⁵⁷⁷

Al-Qalqashandī's writing, especially that which he addressed to al-Mu'taḍid II in the *Ma'āthir* which seemingly encouraged the caliph to assume an inflated sense of importance, represents a current among scholars who believed that the Abbasid presence in Cairo was vital to the growth and success of an "Islamic" Mamluk empire. His writing implies that the establishment of the caliphate in Cairo was a positive development: simply having an Abbasid scion in place implied the existence of a just and functional government, regardless of whether the caliph had the ability to command, forbid, or be obeyed. The Mamluk regime, through various proxies, ensured that Islamic prayers were upheld in Egypt, and the land wanted for naught to flourish as the heart of a great empire. All of this might appear as mere flattery for a caliph with hardly any political power. Nevertheless, it represents an existing convention among the religious intelligentsia; otherwise, al-Qalqashandī and others would scarcely have given voice to it.

Despite his awareness of the rich history of documents of the Islamic world, al-Qalqashandī's theoretical expressions of the caliphate and preservation of its norms reflect the classical work of al-Māwardī more than the actual practices of Mamluk Cairo.¹⁵⁷⁸ It may not have been the intention of al-Qalqashandī's work to describe the existing duties or power relationship of the Abbasid caliph and the Mamluk sultan, or to detail the theoretical significance of the caliph in Cairo.

Al-Qalqashandī, again following the lead of Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, honors the contemporary Abbasid caliph with the classical title *al-imām al-a'ẓam*.¹⁵⁷⁹ Although he fails to insist on the Qurayshī descent of the leader in clear terms and recognizes the legitimacy of rule by usurpation, al-Qalqashandī nevertheless emphasizes the caliph's importance in society, while leaving the way clear for rule by the Mamluk sultans. Like earlier writers, al-Qalqashandī's work lends stability to the status quo, but also demands respect for the contemporary Abbasid caliph, whose mere

¹⁵⁷⁷ See: Jørgen S. Nielsen, "Maẓālim and Dār al-'Adl under the Early Mamluks," *Muslim World* 66 (1976): 114-32; Robert Irwin, "The Privatization of "Justice" under the Circassian Mamluks," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 63-70; Jonathan P. Berkey, "The Muhtasibs of Cairo under the Mamluks: Toward an Understanding of an Islamic Institution," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 245-76; Albrecht Fuess, "Ẓulm by Maẓālim? The Political Implications of the Use of Maẓālim Jurisdiction by the Mamluk Sultans," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 121-42.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Vermeulen, "La bay'a califale," 301.

¹⁵⁷⁹ In his preface to letters making use of Abbasid authority, Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh pays respect to the caliph of his day, "the *imām* al-Mutawakkil 'alā 'l-lāh" as *mawlanā al-imām al-a'ẓam al-amūr al-mu'minīn*. See: *Tathqīf*, 7.

presence allows the Mamluk sultanate to attain true distinction as the new Baghdad set up in the *ad hoc* heartland of the Muslim world.¹⁵⁸⁰

Advice Literature in the Mamluk Period

In the context of the medieval Middle East, different forms of wisdom and advice literature date back to Arabic translations of Pahlavi originals. After the Abbasid revolution of the mid-eighth century, writings of the so-called “mirrors for princes” genre appeared with some regularity in Arabic and Persian to moralize on just government and promise guidance to rulers by way of maxims, aphorisms, and anecdotes.¹⁵⁸¹ Secretaries, courtiers, and even religious scholars penned works of advice literature at the behest of one patron or another in an Islamic sovereign’s court.¹⁵⁸² Many works adopted a political framework based on Persian or Near Eastern kingship rather than Islamic scriptural sources, or in some cases, treated the Qur’ān and prophetic traditions as one of many sources of political wisdom.¹⁵⁸³ Many works tended to offer timeless political wisdom rather than situation-specific counsel. “Mirrors” frequently understood kings to be a special class of human beings comparable to prophets in divine favor and sought to instruct the ruler on how best to uphold justice in his realm, enjoy the obedience of his subjects, and maintain the reins of power to clamp down on sedition and conspiracy through active networks of spies, bodyguards, postal riders, and strategic intimates.¹⁵⁸⁴

Despite the overall richness of Mamluk literature, which has been studied in earnest only recently, authors in Mamluk Egypt and Syria were not especially known for composing works of *Fürstenspiegel*. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss some salient examples dating from the Mamluk period. The first is the *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal* of Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdallāh al-‘Abbāsī (d. after 716/1316), a standard “mirrors for princes” work, followed by the section on government administration in al-Nuwayrī’s scribal encyclopedia *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, and finally the “mirror” comprised of animal fables: the *Fākihāt al-khulafā’ wa-mufākahāt al-ẓurafā’* compiled by the Syrian scholar Ibn ‘Arabshāh (d. 854/1450). Primarily works based on a Persian model, they covered many topics, but only their bearing on the imamate and the Abbasid caliphate need concern us here.¹⁵⁸⁵

¹⁵⁸⁰ For the bureaucratic implications of al-Qalqashandī’s support of the Abbasid caliphate, see Chapter 5 below.

¹⁵⁸¹ Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 357-453.

¹⁵⁸² Crone, *God’s Rule*, 153.

¹⁵⁸³ Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 112-8; Anjum, *Politics*, 254.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Crone, *God’s Rule*, 153-6.

¹⁵⁸⁵ For other works of Mamluk advice literature, see: Haarmann, “Injustice of the Turks,” 62-3.

Mamluk advice literature, like much of the discourse on the imamate itself, assumes that the Mamluk sultan, aided by his subsidiaries and legal delegates, after having been deputized by the Abbasid caliph, assumes all the *imām*'s classical roles, becoming thereby the most appropriate target for political wisdom. Authors such as Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, al-Nuwayrī, as well as Ibn Jamā‘a, Ibn Taymiyya, and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, all composed advisory works in the early fourteenth century, each deeply preoccupied with the great problem of their era: “the threat of military, cultural, and religious annihilation at the hands of the Ilkhanids.”¹⁵⁸⁶ Against a backdrop of peril, much of their advice to the Mamluk sultan encouraged military action.¹⁵⁸⁷

Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī: Advice for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr

Little is known about the life of the Mamluk courtier Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdallāh al-‘Abbāsī (d. after 716/1316), allegedly a descendant of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and the author of *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal*, a rare Mamluk “mirror” dedicated to the short-reigning amir and first ethnically “Circassian” sultan, Baybars al-Jāshinkīr (r. 709/1308-9).¹⁵⁸⁸

Divided into four sections covering the mandates of kingship, the important personnel and machinery of the king’s polity, court ceremonial, and war, the *Āthār* provides protocols of governance based on past examples of notable pre-Islamic and Islamic rulers.¹⁵⁸⁹ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī follows many of the themes associated with Perso-Islamic advice literature such as commentary on the king’s obligations to his subjects and the overall importance of justice and obedience which cites the so-called “sovereignty verse” of the Qur’ān (4:59)¹⁵⁹⁰ and discusses various interpretations of the “holders of power” (*ulū al-amr*).¹⁵⁹¹ The *Āthār* discusses notions of divine election and asserts that God chooses rulers based on proofs from the Qur’ān and prophetic traditions.¹⁵⁹² In regard to the caliphate, Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī’s presentation as a whole assumes the

¹⁵⁸⁶ Broadbridge, “Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society,” 233.

¹⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdallāh al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal fī tartīb al-duwal* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1989), 22-3.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, much like the *Siyar al-mulūk* (or *Siyāsat-nāma*) of Nizām al-Mulk, provides examples from ancient Iranian lore, Sasanid kings, and the pre-modern Islamic past through such figures as Alexander the Great, Kayūmarš the first Iranian man and king, Anūshīrvān, Bahrām Gūr, Kaykā’ūs, as well as the Prophet and his companions, the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, Maḥmūd of Ghazna, ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, the Samanid ruler Nūḥ bin Naṣr, and the Great Seljuq sultan Tughril Beg amongst others. Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī also penned a chronicle of Egyptian history down to the year 717/1317. See: Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk: fī mukhtaṣar sīrat man waliya Miṣr min al-mulūk : yu’arrikhu min ‘aṣr al-farā’ina wa-al-anbiyā’ ḥattā sanat 717 H*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2003).

¹⁵⁹⁰ “O you who believe: Obey God and obey the Messenger, and those among you who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to God and His Messenger, if you believe in God and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.”

¹⁵⁹¹ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal*, 90-4.

¹⁵⁹² Ibid., 57.

status quo of Mamluk politics, namely, that the caliph has formally delegated the sultan with authority to act as the classical Islamic sovereign who must now be treated with the old trappings of caliphate and kingship. Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī thus leaves little room for the Abbasid caliph of his day, al-Mustakfī, and focuses on the realities of the sultanate, a term he makes interchangeable with caliphate and imamate.

The author examines two relevant verses of the Qur’ān concerning the caliphate: the verse of the Davidian caliphate (38:26)¹⁵⁹³ and an earlier verse which states that God makes caliphs (deputies in charge) of mankind in the land to see how they will act (7:129), and concludes that the purpose of the caliphate is for the acting ruler to hold divine appointment over the people and rule amongst them in truth and justice.¹⁵⁹⁴

While the words “*malik*,” “*sultān*,” and “*khalīfa*,” are interchangeable in the *Āthār*, the first two appear most regularly. In his chapter on the king’s relations with neighboring rulers, Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī acknowledges that the Franks have their pope, while the Muslims have their caliph.¹⁵⁹⁵ Because the title of caliph had taken on a sensitive meaning in early Mamluk Egypt, especially at a time when the rule of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr had grown unpopular, Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī may have been conscious of not overusing the word, or allowing it to overshadow the importance of Baybars II as the legitimate sultan against the resurgent threat of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹⁵⁹⁶

The first two sections of the *Āthār* deal with the king’s behavior with his subordinates, emphasizing that he must respect and heed their advice. Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī thus comments on the state of the sultan’s relationship with the religious establishment (of which the Abbasid caliph was a member *ex officio*). The seventh chapter (*bāb*) of the first section (*qism*) addresses the sultan’s relationship with the scholastic class of his regime, the ‘*ulamā*’ and doctors of the law. Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī calls upon the king, if he wished to lead a mighty empire, to respect his resident scholars, just as the Greeks and Persians honored their men of wisdom. The author writes that in the days when prophets such as David and Solomon had been kings, they were constantly engaged in the religious sciences, but in times when rulers were no longer adept in religious learning, at the very least, they needed to be great patrons of the scholars.¹⁵⁹⁷ For Ḥasan al-

¹⁵⁹³ “O David, verily we have made you caliph on the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the path of God.”

¹⁵⁹⁴ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal*, 67. For a discussion of Ibn al-‘Abbāsī’s views on succession, a sensitive issue in light of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr’s usurpation of the Qalawunid line by his displacement of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see: Frédéric Bauden, “The Sons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Politics of Puppets: Where Did It All Start?” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009), 56-7.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal*, 100.

¹⁵⁹⁶ For Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī’s coverage of the brief sultanate of Baybars II, see: *Nuzhat al-mālik wa-al-mamlūk*, 190-4.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal*, 111.

‘Abbāsī, the prestige of the *‘ulamā*’ derived from their protection of the holy law, which, incidentally, was also one of the charges of the king. He cites the Abbasids of Baghdad who built famous *madrasas* as a concerted effort to promote an official understanding of Islam, as well as the caliph al-Ma’mūn who engaged directly in the religious debates of his time and, for better or worse, even attempted to promulgate his own favored version of the faith.¹⁵⁹⁸

The king is likewise charged with protecting pious worshippers who choose to reside in his realm. According to Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, every kingdom has pious aesthetes that choose to cloister themselves away to focus on religious devotions. Not only must the king see that they are undisturbed, he must also seek their counsel when the need arises, as their piety distinguishes them from the masses.¹⁵⁹⁹ While this particular stipulation no doubt addresses patronage for Sufis, the Abbasid caliph was similarly cloistered away and expected to pursue religious interests which included praying for the sultan’s realm and studying religious sciences in accordance with a Mamluk desire to cultivate the Abbasid caliph as an *‘ālim*, a scholar capable of offering informed advice, engaging in public debate, and carrying out *ijtihād*.¹⁶⁰⁰

Also amongst those who must be protected and honored by the king are the noble descendants of venerable houses. Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī divides these into two groups: the first, progeny of the prophets and their companions, saints, and notable aesthetes; and the second group, the descendants of just or noble kings. Quoting the ḥadīth, “whomever honors the Quraysh is honored by God,” Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, himself of Abbasid stock, affirms that the Quraysh were to be honored in Mamluk Egypt, which was likely a nod to the resident line of caliphs as well as the other local *sharīf* descendants of the Prophet. Since the scholars were famously described by Muḥammad as “heirs of the prophets,” the *Āthār* extended protection to them as well. It was thus the mark of a good king and a just kingdom that people of noble descent within its territory would be respected and cared for by the authorities.¹⁶⁰¹

In the second section of the *Āthār*, which contains Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī’s exposition of the king’s inner circle and the protocols of his servants, one finds many of the usual features of a classical Perso-Islamic Mirror for Princes. The author reiterates that the sultan is God’s shadow on earth, and that entering his presence raises one’s status and requires a special propriety. The importance of recognizing the king is underscored by the reminder of the Prophet’s statement that whoever fails to recognize the “*bay’a* upon his neck [i.e. his duty to recognize the incumbent

¹⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 116-8.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 120-1.

¹⁶⁰⁰ See my discussion in Chapter 6.

¹⁶⁰¹ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī, *Āthār al-uwal*, 130-3. Nevertheless, according to Crone, many “mirrors” authors viewed Qurayshī descent as superfluous because divinely-appointed kings represented the best and most noble people which God could raise up as easily as bring down. See: *God’s Rule*, 154.

ruler, in this case the Mamluk sultan as acting *imām* and deputy of the Abbasid caliph]” dies the death of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. It is in the second section that Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī refers to the king as sultan. The sultan is beneficent, like a sea containing hidden pearls or a mountain flush with fruits and overgrowth, though he is as temperamental as a child and must be approached with sweetness.¹⁶⁰²

Although Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī provides notable examples of the past, he is not specific in naming the various offices of the religious establishment such as the caliph, or the chief qadis and their deputies; instead, he covers them in a general discussion.

The *Āthār* discusses the role of other members of the king’s ruling apparatus including the wazir, the importance of *shūra* counsel, the various bureaus (*dīwāns*), postal riders and messengers, the *maẓālim* courts, and those who protect access to the king such as the chamberlains (*ḥujjāb*) as well as a variety of associates and boon-companions.¹⁶⁰³ Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī emphasizes the importance of capable advisors for the king both among his intimates and the ‘*ulamā*’. Overall, the work reinforces the concept of a multi-faceted sultanate-imamate where many role-players and position-holders cooperate to run a classical state comparable to the lauded Persian, Greek, and Islamic models. The king or sultan is in effect, a divinely selected *primus inter pares* who directs matters with the resources of the state at his disposal. The wazir shares his burdens, advises him based on religious sources and helps organize his realm.¹⁶⁰⁴ The bureaucrats and secretaries are the king’s tongue. In order for the state to function, there can be no disconnect between the king and his advisors and messengers.¹⁶⁰⁵ Likewise the king must have the best people in his army and choose the best men in creation to fill out the ranks if he wishes to replicate the military successes of Alexander and Anūshīrvān.¹⁶⁰⁶ The *maẓālim* provides the means through which the king dispenses justice, the proper execution of which serves as evidence of royal integrity.¹⁶⁰⁷

On further indications of sovereignty, Ḥasan al-‘Abbāsī acknowledges also that in the Mamluk period, as had been the case under the Abbasids of Baghdad and their Buyid and Seljuq overlords, it was the prerogative of the king to name himself and the caliph on coinage.¹⁶⁰⁸

¹⁶⁰² Ibid., 139-40, 196.

¹⁶⁰³ Ibid., 144-95.

¹⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 144-7.

¹⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 150.

¹⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 156.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 168-76.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 208.

Al-Nuwayrī and the Wisdom of the Arab Litterateurs

The Egyptian historian and encyclopedist Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) worked as a clerk during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, managing state land in the *dīwān al-khāṣṣ* and tending to administrative affairs as a member of the *dīwān al-inshāʾ*. Government service furnished al-Nuwayrī with access to the Mamluk sultan as well as to important documents which the author made use of in the historical and administrative sections of his 9,000 page encyclopedia, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* compiling all the knowledge needed by a scribe.

Al-Nuwayrī's encyclopedia is composed of five books (*fann*, pl. *funūn*) subdivided into five sections (*qism*, pl. *aqsām*), each with varying numbers of chapters (*bāb*, pl. *abwāb*). Al-Nuwayrī's idealized discussion of rulers and their governments is the fifth and final section in the second *fann* of the *Nihāya* which deals with mankind. After having treated heaven and earth in the first *fann*, al-Nuwayrī covers living beings in the next three books: mankind, animals, and plants. His exploration of the human experience discusses physiology, love poetry, genealogy, wine, music, and other elements before examining the governance of human beings which the author subdivides into fourteen chapters devoted to administrative organization.¹⁶⁰⁹ Al-Nuwayrī's treatment of imamate and kingship is divided into fourteen *abwāb*, covering familiar topics such as the conditions for the imamate, mutual obligations between the ruler and his subjects, what constitutes superior statecraft, the men around the ruler, the importance of advice and consultation (*shūra*), amirs, wazirs, chamberlains and the keeping of secrets, warfare and its leaders, judiciary, *maẓālim* courts, *ḥisba*, and the bureaucracy.

As a master encyclopedic compiler, al-Nuwayrī composed a section on administration which drew on numerous earlier works, including the eleventh century Shāfiʿī jurist al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥalīmī al-Jurjānī (d. 403/1012) whose *al-Minhaj* the author quoted alongside al-Māwardī. Al-Nuwayrī's compilation on government is unique by virtue of the author's selections (throughout the *Nihāya*) from classical Arabic *adab* compilations. On the subject of government administration, al-Nuwayrī draws on the work of Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ (*al-Adab al-kabīr* and *Rasāʾil Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ*), Ibn Qutayba (*ʿUyūn al-akhbār*), Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (*Kitāb al-aghānī*), and the *ʿIqd al-farīd* of Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, amongst others, to provide examples for his discussion of leadership and government.¹⁶¹⁰

¹⁶⁰⁹ See volumes 6 through 9 of al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab* which deal with government administration and secretarial arts.

¹⁶¹⁰ Al-Nuwayrī likewise appropriates the wisdom of Aristotle, the Sasanian kings, and the *Nahj al-balāgha* attributed to the fourth rightly-guided caliph, ʿAlī ibn Abī Tālib. For a comprehensive listing of sources used by al-Nuwayrī in the first four *funūn* of the *Nihāya*, see: Elias I. Muhanna, "Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab*" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 180-4.

The first chapter (*bāb*) on administrative organization deals with the conditions for the imamate, in which al-Nuwayrī distinguishes between the legal (*sharʿiyya*) conditions of the *imām* and the traditional (*ʿurfīyya*) conditions concerning the king (*malik*). Concerning the legal qualities, al-Nuwayrī favors the opinions of al-Ḥalīmī for their brevity and clarity. Al-Ḥalīmī has three requirements: that the *imām* be of Qurayshī stock, that he be knowledgeable enough to make rulings on matters of prayer, alms distribution, the appointment of qadis, the proper execution of *jihād* and the dispersal of war booty, and finally, that he have sufficient probity for matters of religion, thereby immersing himself in works of religious piety, for he is accountable to God and the Muslim community.¹⁶¹¹ As for the shorter section on the traditional or conventional conditions for the imamate (the author having swapped the word “*imām*” for “*malik*”), al-Nuwayrī does not name explicit stipulations, rather he compiles a number of anecdotes from the first Umayyad caliph Muʿāwiya, the Abbasid era secretary and litterateur Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, and a number of popular sayings which enumerate the things a king should *not* be (i.e., excessively angry, a liar, miserly, severe in temperament, envious, or cowardly).¹⁶¹²

That al-Nuwayrī differentiates between *imām* and *malik*, implies that there are certain prerequisites for the imamate which preclude that the office-holder must be free from the less favorable qualities of a ruler engaged in *mulk*. This interpretation lends itself to the idea that there was a Quraysh-descended Abbasid *imām* engaged in religious practices, who had delegated authority to the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who, although a “traditional” king (one thoroughly engaged in the unsavory and impious tasks of ruling), was also presented as a paragon of just rule and piety.

In the second chapter on administrative organization, al-Nuwayrī begins discussing the office of the “sultan” whom, through an excerpt from Ibn ʿAbd al-Rabbih, he describes as “the reins of power, the organization of rights, the upholder of the punishments (*qawām al-ḥudūd*), and the axis upon whom the undertaking of worldly and spiritual [affairs is hung] (*quṭb qiyyām al-dunyā wa-al-dīn*), and who is God’s sanctuary on His earth, His shadow extended over His slaves.”¹⁶¹³

As an encyclopedist, al-Nuwayrī followed a hierarchy of source material for all his compilations. Most chapters begin with relevant verses from the Qurʾān, followed by prophetic traditions, and then an array of anecdotes and sayings from notable Islamic rulers, Iranian kings, as well as selections from classical works of Arabic *adab* literature. The third chapter deals with

¹⁶¹¹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 6:1-2. There is some room to maneuver, however, if a candidate is found lacking in one or more of al-Ḥalīmī’s stipulations (6:3).

¹⁶¹² Ibid., 6: 4-5.

¹⁶¹³ Ibid., 6:5.

that which the subjects owe to the king (*malik*), namely obedience, advice, and reverence. Muslims had to advise their sultan, and whosoever befriends the sultan was obliged to advise him in a friendly way so he may discreetly learn of his faults. For his part, the sultan or king must not suppress the advice of his subjects.¹⁶¹⁴ The basis for the reverence of the subjects is the king's status as God's shadow (*fay'* or *ẓill*) on earth or God's pole or spear (*raml*) on the earth.¹⁶¹⁵

In the fifth chapter concerning kingly obligations to subjects, al-Nuwayrī stresses justice, which is an important theme throughout the section of the *Nihāya* devoted to administration.¹⁶¹⁶ In addition to the eight sentences on justice written by Aristotle to Alexander the Great,¹⁶¹⁷ al-Nuwayrī quotes sayings on justice attributed to the mythical Persian kings Jamshīd and Ardashīr and devotes several pages to the characteristics of the just *imām*.¹⁶¹⁸

While al-Nuwayrī's presentation appears to recognize the premise that the Abbasid caliph endowed the broader "imamate" with its obligatory Qurayshī connection and religious sanctity, it was of course his own master al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who truly upheld justice and wielded power in the Mamluk realm, and whom al-Nuwayrī likely addressed in his presentation of just government.

Ibn 'Arabshāh (d. 854/1450): Fruits of the Caliphs

Although the Syrian scholar Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Arabshāh was born in Mamluk Syria and died in Mamluk territory in 1450, the course of his life was sharply disturbed by his capture by Temūr's forces following the latter's conquest of Damascus in 803/1400. The author subsequently was led on a whirlwind tour of early fifteenth century courts in Central Asia and Anatolia, first as a prisoner but eventually as a respected visiting scholar. After the death of his last patron, the Ottoman sultan Mehmed I (816-24/1413-21), Ibn 'Arabshāh returned to Syria in 1422 and attempted to reestablish himself in the Mamluk realm, making numerous trips to Cairo until his death.¹⁶¹⁹ The author's years away from his homeland imbued his works of history and advice literature with unique insights drawn from exposure to Persian, Turkish, and Mongolian traditions that cultivated his unique voice.¹⁶²⁰

¹⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 6:9-10.

¹⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 6:12.

¹⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 6:16.

¹⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 6:33-9.

¹⁶¹⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:549-51; idem, *Manhal*, 2:131-45; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw'*, 2:126-31. See also: Robert D. McChesney, "A Note on the Life and Works of Ibn 'Arabshāh," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 233-4.

¹⁶²⁰ Broadbridge, "Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society," 233 note 11. Ibn 'Arabshāh was likely influenced by other works of advice literature and "mirrors for princes" such as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Nasirean Ethics*.

While Ibn ‘Arabshāh is remembered for his well-known and scathing Arabic biography of Temür, *‘Ajā’ib al-maqdūr fī nawā’ib Tīmūr*, it is his later “mirrors for princes” work, the *Fākihat al-khulafā’ wa-mufākahat al-ẓurafā’* (*Delectable Fruits of the Caliphs and Witty Banter of the Stylish Folk*), dedicated to the Mamluk sultan Jaqmaq and dated to about 852/1448, also in Arabic, that concerns us here. The *Fākiha* is in the tradition of the ancient Sanskrit *Kalīla wa Dimna* literature, anecdotes of political wisdom that appear in the guise of animal fables, rendered in Arabic in the eighth century by the late Umayyad and early Abbasid courtier Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 139/756), perhaps the quintessential work of the genre.

With some alterations, including the introduction of a substantial amount of historical material in its ultimate and penultimate chapters, Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s *Fākiha* is primarily an expanded reworking of an earlier Persian work, the eleventh century *Marzubān-nāma* of Sa’d al-Dīn al-Warāwīnī.¹⁶²¹ Like the *Marzubān-nāma*, the *Fākihat al-khulafā’* is largely a collection of moralistic fables and anecdotes of wisdom, bound together within several smaller framework stories which are then part of a larger framework story. The first eight chapters of the *Fākiha* share much in common with the *Marzubān-nāma*, although Ibn ‘Arabshāh completed significant re-writing of al-Warāwīnī’s tales with historical asides and anecdotes unique to his own mid-fifteenth century interpretation of the book. Because the work is largely an Arabic translation of an earlier Persian work, it is difficult to analyze it as an “original” work.¹⁶²² Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Arabshāh has attempted to modernize the book and in its Arabic form, update it for what we may assume must be a Mamluk audience.

Manuscripts and their Implications

Whereas many similarly composed books were likely deposited into a ruler’s *kutubkhāna* treasury only to languish forgotten, we can say with some certainty that the *Fākiha* enjoyed popularity well transcending the date of its original composition. Additional manuscripts were completed during the last years of the author’s life, suggesting that the book circulated among the circle of courtiers associated with Jaqmaq and his successors. We know that one manuscript

¹⁶²¹ It is possible that Ibn ‘Arabshāh did not make a direct translation of the Persian *Marzubān-nāma* of Warāwīnī and instead rendered a late fourteenth century Turkish translation of the work made by Šadr al-Dīn Sheykhoghlu into Arabic. While employed as *kātib al-sirr* in the Ottoman court, Ibn ‘Arabshāh made many translations from Arabic and Persian into Turkish. See: John E. Woods, “Ebn ‘Arabshāh, Šehāb-al-Dīn Abu’l-‘Abbās Aḥmad,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1996), 7:670.

¹⁶²² Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s motives for translating the book are unclear from the work’s introduction. We do not know whether the idea to translate the work was proposed to him by someone else, or if he offered to do so himself. Ibn ‘Arabshāh, familiar with the work and his own intellectual milieu, may have realized that the stories would resonate in Mamluk society.

completed on 25 Ramaḍān 852/22 November 1448 under the supervision of Ibn ‘Arabshāh himself, now housed in St. Petersburg, was commissioned by the wazir Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad al-Zāhirī, likely one of Jaqmaq’s appointees.¹⁶²³

Two more manuscripts at the National Library of Egypt (Dār al-Kutub MS Adab Taymūr 764 and MS Adab ‘Arabī 2202) are dated close to the author’s death in 854/1450.¹⁶²⁴ Other copies of the text exist in the important Western collections, and subsequent editions have appeared ever since Georg W. Freytag published his version with a Latin translation as *Fructus imperatorum et iocatio ingeniosorum* (Bonn, 1832–52).¹⁶²⁵

Reasons for the Commissioning of the Fākiha

What, if anything, might the commissioning of such a work divulge about the demands of Jaqmaq’s court? On the surface, its introductory section uncovers very little about the intentions of Ibn ‘Arabshāh apart from offering a straightforward vehicle to deliver messages about proper rule on the tongues of animals.

The introduction opens, as one might expect, with praise for God’s creation of beasts and other living things as a sign (*āya*) of His existence, wisdom, power, and generosity. Moreover, one reads that each animal in its own way praises God and testifies to His existence and divine unity (*tawḥīd*).¹⁶²⁶ Moving to praise for the Prophet, the introduction then lauds Muḥammad’s influence over the natural world, referring to incidents in which gazelles, camels, stones, clay, trees, tree stumps, and even the moon physically or verbally paid respect to the Prophet’s authority or sought his assistance or protection. Indeed, it goes on, God, free from all faults and blemishes, wrote into the atoms of every created thing matters of wonder for people to

¹⁶²³ The St. Petersburg manuscript includes Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s writing on folio 272r: “The author has finished reading this text, all is correct – according to the will of God Most High.” See: Yuri A. Petrosyan and others, *Pages of Perfection: Islamic Paintings and Calligraphy from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg* (Lugano: ARCH Foundation, 1995), 192.

¹⁶²⁴ Ayman ‘Abd al-Jābir al-Buḥayrī believed Taymūr 764 was an autograph because it included the author’s own colophon, though Arnoud Vrolijk, in his review of al-Buḥayrī’s edition, points out that just because a manuscript contains an author’s colophon, it is not always an autograph, as Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s colophon appears in several manuscript copies including Berlin MS Petermann 295, Leiden Or. 135, and a later Cairo edition dating to 1316/1898. The Taymūr manuscript is also copied in two different hands. See: *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 2 (2004): 216-7.

¹⁶²⁵ See also: *GAL*, 2:29-30, no. 3; Suppl. 2:25, no. 3. In addition to an 1869 edition published by the Dominican fathers of Mosul, Vrolijk has numbered at least twelve Cairo editions of the *Fākiha* dating between 1276/1860 and 1325/1908. More recently Muḥammad Rajab al-Najjār’s edition of the *Fākiha* (Kuwait: Dār Su‘ād al-Ṣabāh, 1997- hereafter cited as Najjār 1997) was joined three years later by that of Ayman ‘Abd al-Jābir al-Buḥayrī (Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-‘Arabiyya, 2001, hereafter cited as Buḥayrī 2001).

¹⁶²⁶ Georg W. Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum et iocatio ingeniosorum* (Bonn, 1832–52) 1; Najjār 1997, 35-6; Buḥayrī 2001, 21. See also: Stefan Leder, “Conventions of Fictional Narration in Learned Literature,” in *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature*, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 51-2.

contemplate, that they might be led toward correct guidance and *tawhīd*. According to Ibn ‘Arabshāh, however,

When these signs (*āyāt*) became numerous and the wisdom of their florescent garden spread out to the lowlands and highlands, and their implicit wonders and lessons began to decrease, and the appearance of their decrees became repetitive for the subjects to hear and see, and for souls to repeat to themselves; hearts became unable to attain [their lessons and meaning] and people failed to benefit from their presence and ceased to regard all of the good fortune they contained. Many of the ‘*ulamā*’ and wise people repeated their sayings but their words fell on deaf ears and thoughts did not depend on them. A group of wise people then endeavored to use the approach of animals, and among them are those who knew the ways to bring [wisdom] out upon the tongues of beasts. [...] They attributed words to these animals so that people would be inclined to listen and desire the character of the animals, because beasts, vermin, and livestock are unlikely sources of wisdom. Neither etiquette (*adab*), nor cleverness is attributed to them, rather animals have none of these things: knowledge, deeds, burdens, etc., because their nature is wild, harmful, predatory and corrupt. If, however, you attribute to them the best of ethical manners (*makārim al-akhlāq*) and if you make them interact in ways of virtue, intellect and conformity, even though [such animals] are inclined towards betrayal (which is the opposite of loyalty), [...] [human] ears will listen to their reports and hearts will welcome them with feelings of goodly warmth [...] Now that all these people have seen that animals can do such things, they feel at peace in their souls and cease to be melancholy and they rejoice, listening in delight to [the animal fables], inclining towards their natures.¹⁶²⁷

Ultimately, Ibn ‘Arabshāh proposes that his readers are more apt to accept moral tales calling them to righteous rule and godly piety from the tongues of likeable and clever animals than the stuffy “men of the turban.” The author of the *Fākiha* thus hopes that his audience, while contemplating lessons about justice, ethics and good government, can recognize that they themselves “are among the people (i.e., the human race) who *do* speak and are honored and noble. The fact that mankind has intellects which the animals do not, will make them increase in their vision (*baṣīra*) or interest.” By removing human personalities from the world of mankind and inserting them into the animal kingdom to provide thinly-veiled commentary on political situations, the author wishes to make readers engage with the experience by introducing a more dynamic medium for his discourse. Indeed, “when people read of these abilities among the animals, it will make them wish to [behave in a similar manner].”

Content of Interest

Twentieth and early twenty-first century printed editions of the *Fākiha* adapted from the Dār al-Kutub manuscripts in Cairo include brief anecdotes of historical figures closer to the Mamluk period that do not appear in Freytag’s Bonn edition.

¹⁶²⁷ Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum*, 2; Najjār 1997, 37-8; Buḥayrī 2001, 24-5.

A comparative reading of Chapter 6, “Anecdotes of the Goat al-Mashriqī and the Dog al-Ifriqī” (which corresponds to the sixth *Marzubān-nāma* chapter “Zīrak and Zaruy”¹⁶²⁸), has revealed a number of interesting intrusions by Ibn ‘Arabshāh, though none concerning the Cairo caliphate. The framing story in the *Fākiha* chapter resembles that of al-Warāwīnī’s tale of Zaruy (al-Zanīm or al-Mashriqī in the *Fākiha*), a male goat who escapes a butcher and befriends a dog named Zīrak (Yasār in the *Fākiha*), whom he quickly realizes has qualities that would befit a great king of the animals. Through various fables, the goat, as advisor, helps groom the dog for power. A pigeon later joins the pair to serve as chief propagandist and helps secure the sympathies of all the other animal species for the pending regime. Ultimately Yasār the dog, after receiving copious advice through animal fables, becomes a good and just king of the animals. In addition to the original *Marzubān-nāma* fables, the Cairo manuscripts appear to include a number of notable examples of historical figures including stories of Maḥmūd of Ghazna,¹⁶²⁹ the Buyid ruler ‘Imād al-Dawla,¹⁶³⁰ as well as some of the Mamluk sultans. In one instance, the goat relates a story about the Mamluk sultan al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz to Yasār that the former attributes, strangely, to the Zengid historian Ibn al-Athīr (who died 25 years before the rise of the Mamluks). The story, told by a *khushdāsh* comrade of the then mamlūk Quṭuz, recalls an intimate account of the pair, sitting together in the barracks and making a game of delousing each other. For each louse, one offered the other the choice of a scarce copper coin (*fals*) or a playful slap. During their session, the narrator lets slip his dream of one day becoming a commander of fifty men, which Quṭuz promises to grant him after he comes into wealth and power. Incredulous, the friend, after delivering a hard slap and dismissing Quṭuz as a “poor, crazy, lice-infested maniac” asks the future sultan to explain his braggadocio, to which Quṭuz replies “O ye of little faith (*yā qalīl al-yaqīn*), should you desire anything more than command over fifty, by God I will grant it to you. [...] I shall take over these lands (*diyār*), vanquish the Ṭaṭars and settle the unbelievers and infidels in hell (*dār al-bawār*). [...] For certainly, I have seen the Prophet in a dream in which he said to me, “You shall take possession of Egypt and thwart the Ṭaṭars,” and there is no doubt in that which is related by the Prophet.”¹⁶³¹ Of course, Quṭuz goes on to rise through the ranks and after his legendary victory against the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt, he makes good on his promise to the narrator who became a commander in the Mamluk army. Ibn ‘Arabshāh makes use of the

¹⁶²⁸ See: Sa’d al-Dīn al-Warāwīnī, *The Tales of Marzuban*, tr. Reuben Levy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 129-69.

¹⁶²⁹ Najjār 1997, 335-7; Buḥayrī 2001, 328-30.

¹⁶³⁰ Najjār 1997, 293-6; Buḥayrī 2001, 290-3.

¹⁶³¹ Najjār 1997, 286-7; Buḥayrī 2001, 284-5.

trope attributed to the famous Mamluk sultan to instruct the future king, Yasār the dog, on always honoring his promises as Quṭuz had done.

The sixth chapter also appears to include an extended reference to the 842/1438 advent of sultan Jaqmaq, who initially struggled to exert his control in Syria. During the course of the framing story, various animals come to join the ruling cabinet of Yasār the dog. Among them is a mule deemed questionable for his stubbornness. Yasār ultimately retains him as an advisor, while reminding him that he must be vigilant like the sultan Jaqmaq who is never heedless. It is perhaps worth mentioning, given Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s desire to become a recognized member of the court at the time, the *Fākiha* praised Jaqmaq for maintaining unity at the start of his career even though he had been opposed by the former Mamluks of his predecessor Barsbāy who stubbornly tried to prop up the late sultan’s son Yūsuf in the sultanate, as well as elements of the Syrian army loyal to the amir Īnāl al-Ḥalabī.¹⁶³² The text praises Jaqmaq for restoring order, ushering in stability, and getting the Mamluk sultanate back on track.

A great deal of value lies in the ninth and tenth chapters of the *Fākiha* which contain more historical anecdotes than animal fables and lack an analogue in the *Marzubān-nāma*.¹⁶³³ Together, the last two chapters comprise a lengthy framing sequence about two partridges, al-Najdī the male and his mate Gharghara, who after expressing initial concern about the safety of their family, go on to advise the king of the birds (an eagle) on justice and righteous rule. As it does for the entirety of the book, the framing sequence of the chapters provides a vehicle for a number of stories about the Abrahamic prophets, Sasanian monarchs, and the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs.

For the edification of the eagle king, the tenth chapter includes a discussion of justice, the just *imām*, and exemplary rulers and prophets including Moses, Anūshīrvān, and the pious Umayyad caliph ‘Umar [II] ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99-101/717-20).¹⁶³⁴ Again, unlike Freytag’s edition, the Cairo manuscripts include anecdotes featuring historical figures closer to the Mamluk period such as Nūr al-Dīn Zengī (d. 569/1174), mentioned for his construction of the Palace of Justice (*Dār al-‘Adl*), an important court (later upheld by the Mamluk sultans), which according to the *Fākiha*, the Zengid ruler placed under the direction of Saladin’s uncle Shīrkūh.¹⁶³⁵

¹⁶³² Najjār 1997, 299-301; Buḥayrī 2001, 296-7. On Jaqmaq’s career, rise to power, and early struggles with Syria, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:258-92; idem, *Manhal*, 4:278-94.

¹⁶³³ However, in his introduction to the *Marzubān-nāma*, Warāwīnī states that the original version of the book had nine chapters.

¹⁶³⁴ Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum*, 219-27; Najjār 1997, 517-36; Buḥayrī 2001, 502-22.

¹⁶³⁵ Najjār 1997, 523; Buḥayrī 2001, 508. On the *Dār al-‘Adl* under the Mamluks and their possible adoption of Nūr al-Dīn’s custom, see: P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 144-5; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*,

Despite the title of the work, the only “caliphs” mentioned besides ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz are the Abbasid caliphs al-Manṣūr (136-58/754-75) and Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-93/786-809), both of whom are staples in Islamic “mirrors for princes” literature.¹⁶³⁶ The brief stories of the Abbasid caliphs appear in the tenth chapter in the context of the just ruler. For example, the story of al-Manṣūr refers to someone whose property was wrongfully seized by notables in the caliph’s retinue. The man beseeches the caliph for justice and reminds the Commander of the Faithful that if he is unable to intercede, God’s authority is more powerful than that of the caliph, just as a child first asks his mother and then his father. The caliph, his deputies, and his governors, are merely rungs on the ladder between the ‘āmma and God. As God’s shadow on earth, the holder of power was entrusted with the ability to restore rights. The man goes on to warn al-Manṣūr that if the latter is unable to provide justice, *he* shall make *ḥajj* to the Ka‘ba to complain to God. Thus humbled, the caliph promises to erase the “layers of injustice” (*ẓulmāt*).¹⁶³⁷

A short anecdote concerning Hārūn al-Rashīd describes a moment when the caliph’s famous wazir Ja‘far al-Barmakī (d. 187/803) enters upon an enraged caliph furiously sentencing an offending subject. The wazir advises al-Rashīd: “O Commander of the Faithful, if your anger is on behalf of God, do not be angrier than He himself would be, for there is a limit and punishment for every matter, so do not exceed [God’s] limits. For verily God made you the king of His slaves so remember their position before you and your power over them when they stand before you. Your standing on the Day of Judgment will be before Him and you will be humble and solitary before God.”¹⁶³⁸ Sobered by the words of Ja‘far, al-Rashīd regains composure and heeds the lesson that all kings must walk a path of moderation in their affairs.

The tenth chapter includes an extensive section about Chinggis Khān and the earlier Great Mongols in which the author, using the literary device of a dialogue between a partridge and an eagle, sets up a polemic about Mongol customs and their *yāsa* law code, identified by Ibn

13; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial,” *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 35-45; Albrecht Fuess, “Between *dihlīz* and *dār al-‘adl*: Forms of Outdoor and Indoor Royal Representation at the Mamluk Court in Egypt,” in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London: Routledge, 2011), 156-60. Baybars established the first *Dār al-‘Adl* court in Egypt in 1262-3, possibly to showcase the power he had recently received from the caliph. See: Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 48.

¹⁶³⁶ It is worth mentioning that Ibn ‘Arabshāh was intimately familiar with the anecdotes of Hārūn al-Rashīd in particular. Ibn ‘Arabshāh translated the *Jāmi‘ al-hikāyāt wa-lāmi‘ al-rivāyāt* from Persian to Turkish. The work, which was a compendium of tales compiled by Muḥammad ‘Awfī (fl. 1228), was read by the sultans of Delhi and contained numerous anecdotes of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. See: Woods, “Ebn ‘Arabshāh.” Ibn ‘Arabshāh, may have taken this story from his own translation.

¹⁶³⁷ Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum*, 221-2; Najjār 1997, 523-5; Buḥayrī 2001, 509-10.

¹⁶³⁸ Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum*, 225; Najjār 1997, 533; Buḥayrī 2001, 519.

‘Arabshāh as the *tūra* (*törä*).¹⁶³⁹ Robert Irwin believes that unlike Mamluk chroniclers such as al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī, Ibn ‘Arabshāh borrowed extensive details from ‘Aṭā-Malik al-Juwaynī’s *History of the World Conqueror* combined with his own original information.¹⁶⁴⁰ Although Ibn ‘Arabshāh was more interested in exposing the uglier sides of Mongol custom from an ivory tower of *sharī’a*-minded piety, he was nevertheless aware of the prominence of the *yāsa*/*törä* which he also discussed in his biography of Temür, *‘Ajā’ib al-maqdūr*.¹⁶⁴¹

In light of Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad, the wazir of Jaqmaq who commissioned a copy of the work, one wonders if the Mamluk court of the mid-fifteenth century had somehow acquired an interest in the evolution of Mongol customary law. Although they had been sworn rivals for much of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the Mamluks nevertheless maintained an abiding interest in the latter’s history, military traditions, and doctrine, as well as court culture.¹⁶⁴² Whether or not Ibn ‘Arabshāh was specifically invited to write about Mongol customs or discuss what *he* thought was in the *yāsa*, he took a negative view of Turko-Mongolian law. Although he likens the Mongols to the equally despised pre-Islamic Arabs of the *Jāhilī* era, he also compares the importance of the Chinggisid *yāsa* to Turko-Mongolian societies with the *sunna* of the Prophet among the Muslim community.

Supposing such an interest among the latter Mamluks in Mongol customary law, it might well reflect upon the perception that *they* too had notions and customs well separate from Islamic norms. Like the Mongols, the Mamluks came from the steppes with their own traditions that had the force of law. In imitation of the Mongol customary law, these customs and traditions,

¹⁶³⁹ Freytag, *Fructus imperatorum*, 234; Najjār 1997, 554; Buḥayrī 2001, 538. The contents of the ninth and tenth chapters of the *Fākiha* have been mapped and studied elsewhere, see: Sylvestre de Sacy, “Liber Arabicus” *Journal des savants* (1835): 605-12, 652-66; Robert G. Irwin, “What the Partridge Told the Eagle: A Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 6-10.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Irwin, “What the Partridge Told the Eagle,” 6-8.

¹⁶⁴¹ Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 18 note 29. Other historians of the Mamluk period discussed the *yāsa* from the point of view of its outrages in comparison with the *sharī’a*. Al-Maqrīzī, copying perhaps as Ayalon suggests from al-‘Umarī (who in turn copied from al-Juwaynī!), discusses what he knows of the *yāsa* in the context of complaining that the Mamluk chamberlains (*hujjāb*) dared to try the civilian population on matters falling within the jurisdiction of the *sharī’a* with the “satanic” Mongol *yāsa* instead. See: “The Great Yāsa of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination,” *Studia Islamica* 33 (1971): 105. See also: Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reign of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 93 note 5.

¹⁶⁴² In their early diplomatic dealings with the Mongols from 1260-93, the Mamluks also had to endure Mongol claims of their divine mandate to rule as well as the superiority of the *yāsa* over the *sharī’a*. See my discussion above, p. 58. Evidence suggests that even during the reign of Jaqmaq’s predecessor Barsbāy (825-41/1422-38), Chinggis Khan’s legacy was still highly controversial subject matter at court. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:320-1.

sometimes even taking the name of “*yāsa*” or “*siyāsa*,” share a variety of similarities and differences with Chinggisid Mongol customs.¹⁶⁴³

There are numerous examples of the Mamluks, as people from the steppe, favoring their original customs over the *sharīʿa*, such as the drinking of fermented mares’ milk or the slaughter of horses for consumption — known practices of both the Mongols and the Qipchaq Turks.¹⁶⁴⁴ In regard to the caliphate, we may also point out the unwillingness of the Mamluk sultans ever to execute an Abbasid caliph because, like the Mongols, they were unwilling to shed the blood of royalty, nobility, or the members of a sacred bloodline.¹⁶⁴⁵ It is also worth mentioning that according to Ibn Khaldūn, a number of Abbasid traditions found their way into the Mamluk customary repertoire, including the use of black as an official color (originally used by the Abbasids to honor Hāshimī martyrs). Mamluk sultans appeared garbed in Abbasid black at their ceremonies and displayed Abbasid standards in battle or on special occasions.¹⁶⁴⁶

Mamluk negotiation and interaction with Mongol customary law (if indeed it took place) combined with the ongoing cultivation of their own customs must surely have had bearing on their attitudes towards both the *sunna* of the Prophet and the office of the caliph. In the context of the Mamluks, the caliphate had originally been part of an Islamic language of legitimacy which transcended other models and forms of prestige associated with the later Ayyubids, Qalawunids, Turks, and Circassians, whose fortunes all rose and fell with changing times. From the time of its introduction into the Mamluk world, the caliphate carried a necessarily religious countenance,

¹⁶⁴³ Earlier scholars such as A. N. Poliak and David Ayalon struggled to demonstrate the direct impact of the Chinggisid *yāsa* on the Mamluk sultanate, though there was certainly a Mongol influence on Mamluk governance. See: Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*. Tr. P. M. Holt (London and New York: Longman, 1992), 256-8. On the customary law and developing ceremonial practices of the Mamluks, see: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 42; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 56, 104-9, 112. In a similar though much more pronounced way, Mongol customary law enjoyed an enduring legacy among the early Timurids. See: Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 15-18, 21; idem, “Tamerlane and his Descendants: From Paladins to Patrons,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 3, *The Eastern Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 172-3. For a more recent discussion of the findings of Ayalon and Poliak, see: Charles J. Halperin, “The Kipchak Connection: The Ilkhans, the Mamluks and Ayn Jalut,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 63, no. 2 (2000): 242-5. Yossef Rapoport has taken issue with the idea that *siyāsa* comes from *yāsa* and also discusses the views of the Mamluk ‘*ulamā*’ on non-*sharīʿa* *siyāsa*: “Royal Justice and Religious Law: *Siyāsah* and *Shariʿah* under the Mamluks,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 16 (2012): 95-6.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London, 1986), 115-6.

¹⁶⁴⁵ This did not stop the sultans from imprisoning, banishing and otherwise humiliating the caliphs under their protection. They also risked the displeasure of the ‘*ulamā*’ and the subject population if they publicly executed a sitting Abbasid caliph.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 258-60. The earlier Abbasid caliphs had permitted military commanders or border guards to display their standards, though not always in the same number or color (*Muqaddima*, 292). See also: L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 15.

representing the *'ulamā'* and their assiduous religious approval of the ruling regime.¹⁶⁴⁷ Over time, however, the caliph and his office may have become slightly divorced from the traditional religious understanding (if such a thing was possible) and went on to represent the basis for a brand of universal loyalty with the potential to transcend more localized loyalties to a mamlūk's *ustādh*, *khushdāsh*, or sultan. Any member of the ruling Mamluk apparatus would have been made to understand that loyalty to the symbolic caliphate was a given part of the culture. Sultans who only considered the caliph's presence in their entourage a matter of *realpolitik* would still have seen the caliph as an object which lent prestige and could be used to remind local rivals of the incumbent's preeminence. It was certainly one thing to *pretend* to be allegiant to the caliph for the sake of the religious establishment or the *'amma*, and quite another to continue the "charade" alone among the competing Mamluk factions.

An important and unanswered question remains why the amirs lacked the ability to show disloyalty to the Commander of the Faithful outside the court. Was the caliph a real rallying point, or just a convenient excuse to take up arms against the status quo of their day?¹⁶⁴⁸ The caliph's traditional role in Mamluk ceremonial and customs dictated certain norms and protocols applicable to all. It was part of a political language and at least in theory (though seldom in practice), caliphal allegiance trumped allegiance to the reigning sultan. It may have been easier to turn one's back on a beleaguered and embattled sultan like al-Nāṣir Faraj (in which case the amirs and the people favored the caliph al-Musta'īn against the sultan), rather than a popular sultan like al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (in which case the amirs and the people favored the sultan against the caliph al-Mustakfī). Nevertheless, the political mystique of the caliphate remained constant throughout the life of the Mamluk sultanate and appealing to it never fell out of vogue.¹⁶⁴⁹

It is my feeling that the notion of "defending the caliphate" went deeper in Mamluk culture than merely paying lip-service to an Islamic civilizational convention to appease the *'ulamā'* and secure their support. Instead, "protecting the caliph," an utterly helpless holy man, sometimes even compared to a widow or an orphan, may also have been linked to notions of

¹⁶⁴⁷ Scholars agree that the early Mamluk sultans certainly followed the Seljuq and Ayyubid example of professing loyalty to the Abbasid Caliphate. See: Northrup, "The Bahrī Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250-1390," 268; Yaacov Lev, "Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 12-3.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Indeed this question has been raised before: Lutz Wiederhold, "Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a 'Zahiri Revolt' in Damascus in 1386," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 203-35; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 150; Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Aẓīm Khulī, *al-'Ulamā' fī Miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-Mamlūkī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M.* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 2014), 70-1.

¹⁶⁴⁹ For some discussion of the Mamluk amirs' attitude towards the Abbasid caliphate, see: Annemarie Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Agypten," *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 16-7.

manliness (*muruwwa*), chivalry, and “civic pride” in a way that was neither simply or strictly Islamic. Their unique (secular *and* necessarily religious) interest in the caliphate, like their interest in Mongol customary law, was important to the Mamluks’ construction and perception of their own customs, distinct from Islamic norms. Supported by decades of ceremonial reinforcement, the importance of the caliphate (religious or not) became deeply embedded in the bedrock of the Mamluk ethos until it was eventually taken for granted and treated as a given reality in tune with historical fact.¹⁶⁵⁰ Yes, this caliphate was “Islamic,” but it was also “Mamluk.”

Relevance to the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

The title of the work captured the attention of this researcher for its use of “*khulafā*” during the Mamluk period. In regard to Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s choice of the more regal “*fākiha*” to convey fruit, as opposed to the more mundane “*thamr*,” Sylvestre de Sacy has attempted some explanation:

Quant à la première partie, **فاكية الخلفاء**, je pense qu’elle signifie *les fruits délicieux*, ou, si l’on veut, *le dessert, la collation des souverains*, c’est-à-dire, livre digne d’être offert aux souverains et d’égayer leurs loisirs. Il ne faut pas croire que **فاكية** et son plural **فواكه** soient, rigoureusement parlant, synonymes de **ثمر** et **ثمر**: il y a cette différence que **ثمر** signifie *fruit* d’une manière générale, tandis que **فاكية** signifie *fruit agréable au goût, et qu’on mange avec plaisir*.¹⁶⁵¹

It is indeed curious that Ibn ‘Arabshāh chose the word *khulafā*’ as opposed to the perhaps more applicable *mulūk or salāṭīn*. Al-Warāwīnī’s thirteenth century *Marzubān-nāma* had been written for Abu al-Qāsim Rabīb al-Dīn, a wazīr in the service of Uzbek ibn Muḥammad (607-22/1210-25), the Ildegizid *atabeg* of Azerbaijan.¹⁶⁵² Although one manuscript of the *Fākiha* was commissioned by a wazīr in the court of Jaqmaq, it is less clear from the work’s introduction for *whom else* Ibn ‘Arabshāh may have produced the book, if not Jaqmaq himself. There seems to be hidden significance in the choice of the term “*khulafā*’.” Jaqmaq, renowned for his piety, had been especially fond of the three Abbasid caliphs who tended to his ceremonial needs. That the work was produced during the reign of Jaqmaq, mentions him in some versions of the text and the

¹⁶⁵⁰ In her work on Mamluk legitimacy, Anne Broadbridge also found that after the death of the last Ilkhanid ruler Abū Sa‘īd in 1335, Mamluk ideals of guardianship over Islam (including the Abbasid caliphate) were no longer required with urgency, but were still regularly displayed and maintained as an ideological laurel until they again became relevant after Temür renewed the Mongol threat. See: *Kingship and Ideology*, 145.

¹⁶⁵¹ De Sacy, “Liber Arabicus,” 603.

¹⁶⁵² Warāwīnī names the Sasanian-descended Marzbān ibn Sharwīn as the “originator of the book” in an older form of Persian from the Tabaristan region. See: J. H. Kramers, “Marzbān-Nāma,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 6:632-3.

author himself wrote other works of flattery¹⁶⁵³ for the sultan, may suggest a kind of secret message embedded in the text of the *Fākiha*. Modern scholars, perhaps wary of the work's difficult *saj'* text have given the *Fākiha* short shrift. Multiple manuscripts have made the text and its history difficult to establish. To date, few attempts have been made toward reaching an understanding of the text in the social context from which it emerged, to compare it closely with the *Marzubān-nāma*, or to mine it for the valuable commentary it provides on contemporary Mamluk society as an updated version of a pre-existing text.¹⁶⁵⁴ In short, there is much more juice yet to be squeezed from these "Fruits of the Caliphs."

Later Articulations of the Caliphate

The Courtier's Caliph: Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī

As a member of the class of *awlād al-nās*, Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī (d. 872/1468) enjoyed distinction as an administrator under the sultans Barsbāy and Jaqmaq. His *Zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik* is all that remains of a longer work providing glimpses of government structure in the Circassian period of Mamluk Egypt. The work itself is a collection of ideals and advice appropriate to various positions in the Mamluk bureaucracy such as the sultan, the caliph, and the qadis, as well as military personnel and other royal functionaries.¹⁶⁵⁵

The first chapter surveys the territorial expanse of the Mamluk Empire including the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, as well as several landmarks and holy sites in Egypt.¹⁶⁵⁶ Acknowledging his master Jaqmaq, Khalīl al-Zāhirī discusses the duties of the sultanate in the second chapter. Much of the *Zubda*'s discourse concerns the obligations which make a ruler suitable for the throne. In the case of the sultan, military responsibilities such as providing

¹⁶⁵³ See: Ibn 'Arabshāh (and C. J. L.), "XX. Panegyric on Sultan Jaqmaq," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 39, no. 2 (April 1907): 395-6, 1-27.

¹⁶⁵⁴ However, a somewhat recent Kuwayti master's thesis has attempted to analyze the contemporary Mamluk implications of Chapter 7 of the *Fākiha* which deals with the invasion of the elephant king, juxtaposed alongside Temūr's invasion of Mamluk lands. See: 'Abd Allāh al-Ghāzālī, *al-Sārid wa-al-mukhātab fī Fākihat al-khulafā' wa-mufākahat al-ṣurafā'*: *dirāsa fī al-bāb al-sābi'* (Kuwait: University of Kuwait, 2000-1).

¹⁶⁵⁵ Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī, *Kitāb zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaissé (Cairo: Dār al-'Arab, 1988), 3-7. On Khalīl al-Zāhirī's contribution to Mamluk cultural and administrative history, see: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 370-1; P. M. Holt, "Some Observations on the 'Abbāsid Caliphate of Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 504-5; idem, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 150; Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Šīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 344-5.

¹⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 9-52.

defense, upholding justice and protecting the weak are among the chief duties.¹⁶⁵⁷ A sultan who provides all the services to his subject population is supported by God and enjoys an auspicious reign. Khalīl al-Zāhirī emphatically praises Jaqmaq, who, according to the author, more than satisfies the above criteria, and emphasizes his ability to protect the weak and project his supremacy over Muslim rivals.¹⁶⁵⁸ Jaqmaq, in addition to being king of the Arabs and Persians and master of the pen and the sword, has a name that graces the Friday sermon and the coinage of the realm. Khalīl al-Zāhirī then shifts to the sultan's role as the great protector who oversees and guarantees the law of God and the Prophet, who protects the realm from rebellion, sedition, unbelief, and polytheism. The sultan deflects injustice against the oppressed (*manṣaf al-maẓlūmīn min al-ẓālimīn*), acts as the refuge of widows, orphans, and the impoverished, and finally serves as protector and intimate of the Commander of the Faithful (*walī amīr al-mu'minīn*).¹⁶⁵⁹ It is interesting not only that protecting the caliph is now a formal expectation and duty of the Mamluk sultan, but also that Khalīl al-Zāhirī has placed the caliph at the end of a list of those needing protection after widows, orphans, and the poor.¹⁶⁶⁰ The author extends the concept of the sultan's protection to all of the territories, ports and fortresses under his jurisdiction including Cyprus, the Ḥijāz, Alexandria, Aden and some fortresses in Asia Minor. The sultan is also described as servitor of the two holy cities (*khādim al-ḥaramayn*) which further underscores his role as universal sovereign and protector of religion.¹⁶⁶¹

Khalīl al-Zāhirī concludes his chapter on the sultanate with a discussion of public ceremony implying that as late as the time of Jaqmaq, Abbasid involvement maintained its central legitimizing position. The author notes that investiture occurs

in al-Qaṣr al-Ablaḡ when the electors (*ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aḡd*), gather in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, along with amirs, state dignitaries (*arkān al-dawla al-sharīfa*) and the military assemble to kiss the ground before the sultan after he sits upon the throne of the kingdom following the conclusion of the mutual pledge (*mubāya'a*) and the sultan's handclasp (*muṣāfaḡa*) with the Commander of the Faithful.¹⁶⁶²

A modern interpretation understood this special handclasp as a unique honor of the caliph who by this period, was solely permitted to lock hands with the sultan while the other attendees

¹⁶⁵⁷ Ibid., 58-9.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 66-7.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶² Ibid., 86. On al-Qaṣr al-Ablaḡ, constructed during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḡammad, see: Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 199-213; idem, *Mamluk History through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 136.

observed or kissed the ground.¹⁶⁶³ As sultan, Jaqmaq performed the mutual pledge and interacted with several Abbasid caliphs which afforded Khalīl al-Zāhirī opportunities to observe the ceremonies and the sultan's relationship with al-Mu'taḍid II and al-Mustakfī II.

The author treats the caliphate in more detail during a brief third chapter on the men of religion, dealing first with the caliph and then the chief qadis and other '*ulamā*' of the state.¹⁶⁶⁴ While he chose to treat the sultan first, it is clear that Khalīl al-Zāhirī considers the caliph to wield a position of some influence and importance as nominal ruler over the lands of Islam. His description begins with allusions to the caliph's traditional prestige as God's representative on earth, a "cousin" of the Prophet whom "God Almighty has made ruler over the whole land of Islam."¹⁶⁶⁵ The author states that without a caliph placed in the governing structure with whom the sultan and his entourage could form an alliance, there could be no legitimate sovereignty nor any appointments, judicial rulings or marriages, all of which would be invalid in absence of a caliph.¹⁶⁶⁶ It is thus that Khalīl al-Zāhirī's presentation carries the implication that the caliph bears more importance than even the sultan, considering good government cannot persist without him, no matter how skilled or powerful the sultan may be.¹⁶⁶⁷

The true value of the third chapter on the caliphate lies in Khalīl al-Zāhirī's presentations of caliphal expectations by the mid-fifteenth century. The work offers indication of what the office had become after nearly 200 years incubation in the Mamluk sultanate and its frequent mention in the annals of Jaqmaq's reign:

Among the necessary obligations of the Commander of the Faithful [...] are that he must busy himself with the pursuit of religious knowledge (*'ilm*) and have books to study in his library. When the sultan departs on an urgent matter, the caliph must be in his company to best serve the common interests of the Muslims.¹⁶⁶⁸ Allotted for him are numerous appanages (*jihāt 'adāda*) to meet the expenses (of his household) as well as (other) fine dwellings.¹⁶⁶⁹

Rather than rely on formal juristic tradition, Khalīl al-Zāhirī's discussion of the contemporary caliphate is informed instead by personal interactions with Abbasid caliphs in the court of Jaqmaq. The previous passage emphasizes the caliph's duty to achieve an acceptable level of religious learning (perhaps guided by the classical stipulation that the caliph be able to

¹⁶⁶³ Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *La Zubda kachf el-mamalik de Khalil az-Zahiri* tr. Jean Gaulmier (Beirut, 1950), 136-7. "Après la lecture publique du diplôme de son installation faite par le Caliphe... Le Commandant des fidèles a seul l'honneur de luy toucher la main."

¹⁶⁶⁴ Khalīl al-Zāhirī, *Zubdat*, 89-92.

¹⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁶⁶⁶ This concern seems to reflect the earlier fears of al-Ghazālī. See: Crone, *God's Rule*, 238.

¹⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 90. "*Yakūnu ṣaḥbatahu li-ajal maṣāliḥ al-muslimīn.*"

¹⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

perform *ijtihād*) and to remain far from vulgar politics -- with the important exception of rallying citizens to the sultan's defense of the realm. Both caliphs of the period, al-Mu'taḍid II and al-Mustakfi II were brothers of the tragic al-Musta'in, the caliph-sultan who had been drawn into Mamluk politics and died in exile. Both caliphs subsequently went on to live quiet lives of study and attendance at scholarly salons. Court propriety likewise expected the caliph to be seen at the sultan's side at other times of crisis, whether castigating the latter's enemies or praying for the perpetuation of his state against plague and famine.¹⁶⁷⁰ In return, the caliph could expect placement in the government hierarchy and maintenance of his family and lifestyle, although Khalīl al-Zāhirī only mentions that the properties allotted to the caliph would be enough to meet his needs while offering no specific information.¹⁶⁷¹

Khalīl al-Zāhirī's *Zubda* presents the caliphate in line with the realities of the later fifteenth century, especially during the reign of Jaqmaq. The work presumes that the reader is both aware and familiar with the respective positions of caliph and sultan in Mamluk politics by affirming the caliph's traditional place in the Islamic hierarchy while acknowledging that he has been effectively subordinated to the sultan and the indigenous traditions of Mamluk politics. It is thus that the *Zubda* largely sets out to sketch and enshrine the practices of late fifteenth century Mamluk Egypt based on existing Mamluk customs rather than juristic precedent.

Caliphate and Sultanate in the Court of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī

Khalīl al-Zāhirī did not have the last word on the position of the Abbasid caliphate at the courts of the Circassian Mamluk sultans. A final perspective emerges from the sessions (*majālis*) recorded during the scholarly salons of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, often held several times a week in the Duhaysha hall of the citadel. A series of meetings in the year 910/1505 was preserved as *Nafā'is al-majālis al-sultāniyya*¹⁶⁷² by the Iranian Turkophone scholar Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī who, along with other Persian and Turkish intellectuals, held favor at al-Ghawrī's

¹⁶⁷⁰ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1956–73), 4:487–8; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:77–8; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:46, 282, 395.

¹⁶⁷¹ This is most likely a reference to the shrine revenue from the tomb of Sayyida Nafīsa as well as Abbasid family possession of at least half a dozen estates scattered throughout Mamluk territory.

¹⁶⁷² Through his use of the title "*Nafā'is al-majālis*" al-Ḥusaynī may have been engaging in a bit of shared intertextuality suggestive of a response to or a shared literary exchange with the "*Majālis al-nafā'is*," an earlier compendium of poetry written by rulers and other notables compiled by the Timurid advisor, poet, and cultural figure, Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī (d. 906/1501). Numerous works from the Mamluk period referred directly or indirectly to other works through their text and titles. The late fifteenth century also saw an influx of scholars, litterateurs, and artisans entering Mamluk lands from Timurid Iran, as well as the transcription of numerous Timurid works in Cairo. For a general discussion of intertextuality in the Mamluk period, see: Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication," in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 35–44.

court.¹⁶⁷³ The slightly later and anonymous *Kawkab al-durrī*, completed in 919/1513-4, similarly offers highlights of the sultan's nightly discussions and debates with his scholarly circle arranged by subject matter rather than by session as in the case of the *Nafā'is*.¹⁶⁷⁴

Often beginning with a question posed by the sultan on a variety of topics, the *Nafā'is* provides notable moments, likely edited to put the ruler in a good light, from each evening's discussions and debates.¹⁶⁷⁵ The comments ultimately offer idealized explanations and advice to the sultan. Both the *Nafā'is* and the *Kawkab* indicate that the topics of discussion at the sultan's gatherings ranged from the finer points of Arabic grammar and Islamic jurisprudence, to discussions of the *mawlid* festivals, clothes worn by the followers of the Pharaoh, and even ancient Iranian lore.

The caliphate, in both its classical and contemporary incarnations was a starting point for many discussions at court and was addressed in both the *Nafā'is* and the *Kawkab*. To shed light on the position of the contemporary caliphate, one seeming proponent of the caliph's primacy, a certain male courtier identified as "Umm Abī al-Ḥasan," encouraged discussion of ḥadīth such as the Prophet's alleged statement that the caliphate would remain in the line of al-ʿAbbās until the Day of Judgment,¹⁶⁷⁶ as well as the so-called "30 years ḥadīth" in which the Prophet predicted the longevity of the "true caliphate" until its devolution into *mulk* kingship.¹⁶⁷⁷

A general sampling of the meetings indicates an effort by several intimates of the sultan, including al-Ḥusaynī, to downplay the importance of the caliphate in favor of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. The sultan himself raised questions about his own status and authority in relation to the caliph and in one instance asked attendees to comment on who ought to march first in a funeral procession. Al-Ḥusaynī claimed that the books of *fiqh* were unanimous that the sultan, followed by the qadis, must precede other dignitaries.¹⁶⁷⁸ Umm Abī al-Ḥasan, on the other hand insisted upon priority for the caliph.¹⁶⁷⁹

Indeed, the robust Umm Abī al-Ḥasan, after provocatively suggesting that the marriages and children of Muslims inhabiting lands in which rulers *did not* recognize the Abbasid caliphate

¹⁶⁷³ Irwin, "Political Thinking," 37-8. See also: Mohammed Awad, "Sultan al-Ghawri: His Place in Literature and Learning (Three Books Written under His Patronage)," *Actes du XXe Congrès des Orientalistes, Bruxelles, 1938* (Louvain, 1940), 321-2. On al-Ghawrī's love of the *a'jām* and his interest in the *Shāhnāma*, see: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Sultan al-Ghawrī and the Arts," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 73-8.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Both works have been published together (and paginated separately) as: *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī: ṣafahāt min ta'rīkh Miṣr fī qarn al-ʿāshir hijrī*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAzzām (Cairo 1941).

¹⁶⁷⁵ Irwin, "Political Thinking," 49.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Al-Ḥusaynī, *Nafā'is*, 103-4.

¹⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100-1.

¹⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

of Cairo were illegitimate, launched the company on a lengthy debate (*munāqisha*) on the caliphate and sultanate which occupied several sessions in between Jumādā II and Rajab 911/November-December 1505.¹⁶⁸⁰ Hailing from the non-Arab lands of Greater Iran which had no formal recognition of the Cairo caliph, al-Ḥusaynī was accused by some members of the court of being a child born of such fornication who should be ejected from the sultan's presence.¹⁶⁸¹ The status of Muslim children and marriage conducted in lands which spurned the Cairo Abbasids consumed the discussion for some time. A fatwa was presented to the gathering, ruling that for any child or marriage to be legally recognizable by the *sharī'a*, the king of that land must recognize the appointment of the sitting caliph, al-Mustamsik billāh.¹⁶⁸² Several of the qadis found the fatwa objectionable, however, and suggested punishment for any strict adherents of it.¹⁶⁸³ The issue later irked Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī when his courtiers suggested that even the marriages and children of Egypt could be considered invalid without the *baraka* and perpetual blessings secured by the presence of the Abbasid caliph. The sultan angrily demanded to know if the court considered *him* an inferior to the other sultans of the world.¹⁶⁸⁴

The issue of non-Arab Muslim kings led to a discussion of the classical *sharī'* conditions of the imamate and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's suitability. The assembly agreed that the sultan was just, knowledgeable, male, Muslim, courageous, and able to carry out *ijtihād*, and dodged the issue of Qurayshī descent by citing the ḥadīth that if a suitable Qurayshī *imām* was unavailable, it became permissible to select one from the Kināna tribe, the non-Arabs, or the descendants of the prophets Ismā'īl or Ishāq, and then stating that the Circassians were in fact descendants of the prophet Ishāq.¹⁶⁸⁵

In regard to the caliphate, the sessions also treated the issue of whether the sultan derived glory (*fakhr*) from his position as deputy (*nā'ib*) of the caliph. Al-Ḥusaynī argued that although the ruler of Yemen was not formally the caliph's deputy, he still enjoyed glory and that the same should apply to the sultan of Egypt, who as possessor of the two holy shrines, derived authority and respect not from proximity to the caliph, but rather from the *sharī'a*.¹⁶⁸⁶ Perhaps in search of clarity, al-Ghawrī asked about the status of Baybars after he received his robe of honor from the Abbasid caliph in 659/1260 and again in 661/1262. Al-Ḥusaynī replied that Baybars wished to strengthen the weakened position of the descendants of al-ʿAbbās and wore their robe to lend

¹⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 100-13.

¹⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 106.

¹⁶⁸² Ibid., 109.

¹⁶⁸³ Ibid., 109-10.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 112.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 107.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 110-1.

them his charisma, and that the glory of the caliph came from the fact that the sultan of Egypt honored him by donning his robe. Umm Abī al-Ḥasan then remarked that if such a statement had been uttered in the presence of Qāyṭbāy, that sultan would have promptly beheaded the offender - - an assertion al-Ghawrī found unsettling.¹⁶⁸⁷

It is worth mentioning that numerous meetings adjourned with a final prayer (*khātima*), in which the sultan received “Commander of the Faithful” and “Caliph of the Muslims” among his titles.¹⁶⁸⁸ In one instance, after the sultan had distributed bread to the poor, al-Ḥusaynī publicly addresses al-Ghawrī with the titles before calling him the best of the kings of the world.¹⁶⁸⁹ In discussing the attributes of a noble ruler attributed to al-Ghazālī, al-Ḥusaynī gives thanks to God that “these characteristics are present in the sultan of the world, caliph of the Arabs and non-Arabs [...] the sun of the caliphate [...] Commander of the Faithful and *imām* of the Muslims, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī.”¹⁶⁹⁰ The *Nafā’is* itself concludes with a special prayer for the sultan, identifying him as “caliph of all who inhabit the world.”¹⁶⁹¹ The *Kawkab* similarly opens with praise for the Mamluk sultan as both Commander of the Faithful and caliph of the Muslims.¹⁶⁹²

The question of addressing the king with caliphal titles is addressed later in the latter book, when after receiving a book of Mongol history from the Safavid Shāh Ismā‘īl containing a biographical notice naming a certain Shāhīn Beg Khān “*khalīfat al-raḥmān*,” the sultan’s court debated the issue of calling a king a caliph.¹⁶⁹³ The consensus was that it was acceptable to refer to a king as Commander of the Faithful or *khalīfat al-rasūl*, but impermissible to use any appellation implying successorship to God, such as *khalīfat Allāh* or *khalīfat al-raḥmān*.¹⁶⁹⁴

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī’s own dealings with the two Abbasid caliphs of his reign exhibited ceremonial deference and caution. He was certainly aware of the social pressure that required a sultan to be generous and just with the caliph and was often browbeaten into providing monetary retribution to al-Mustamsik and financial aid for al-Mutawakkil III for fear, perhaps, that the

¹⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 111.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 55, 66.

¹⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 69.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., 86-7.

¹⁶⁹¹ Ibid., 145.

¹⁶⁹² *Kawkab*, 2.

¹⁶⁹³ There appears to be no other information about this mysterious Shāhīn Beg who remains to be identified.

¹⁶⁹⁴ *Kawkab*, 73-4. The debate over the title “*khalīfat Allāh*” and its use and understanding by caliphs and ‘ulamā’ is well known in modern scholarship. See: Montgomery Watt, “God’s Caliph: Qur’ānic Interpretations and Umayyad Claims,” in *Iran and Islam, in Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh, 1971), 565-74; Rudi Paret, “Ḥalīfat Allāh - Vicarius Dei: ein differenzierender Vergleich,” in *Mélanges d’islamologie: volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis*, ed. Pierre Salmon (Leiden: Brill, 1974); Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God’s Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Wadād al-Qāḍī, “The Term ‘khalīfa’ in Early Exegetical Literature,” *Die Welt des Islams* 28 (1988): 392-411.

former caliphs might publicly convey their displeasure towards him. Nevertheless, it appears that when the sultan was alone with his court, he did not mind absorbing a great deal of caliphal pomp and listening to his nobles expound upon the caliph's irrelevance for his satisfaction.

Expectations and Consensus of the Scholarly Elite

The business of recognizing the Mamluk sultanate and constructing official views on the imamate furnished the jurists (as predominantly members of the paid professional class) with government influence. Jurists were able to secure their place within the electoral community who had authority to ratify decisions (*ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aqd*). It was important to emphasize their connection to the sovereignty verse of the Qur'ān (4:59) so that they might stress their inclusion among "those in authority among you," which many alluded to in their writing. To further legitimize the new *imām*, Ibn Jamā'a defines the men who must ratify his selection (*ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aqd*) through their *bay'a* as the amirs, '*ulamā'*', and notables (*wujūh*), the same established elites that had extended their hands in pledge to Baybars and both of his caliphs.¹⁶⁹⁵ Elsewhere Ibn Jamā'a suggests that "those in authority among you" to whom the Qur'ān commands obedience, is a clear reference to the '*ulamā'*'.¹⁶⁹⁶

The '*ulamā'*' agreed that the existence of the caliphate was a part of the proper expression of Islamic rule, one which could not be removed even if understandings of the "imamate" had shifted. While it is impossible to argue that the caliph enjoyed more influence than the Mamluk sultan or indeed much influence at all, the '*ulamā'*' supported the notion that the caliphate must occupy *some* place in the government, though seldom did they venture into specifics. Scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, and al-Qalqashandī were somewhat accommodating of the caliphal metamorphosis while also reflecting the demands of past ideals.

The presence of the caliph in Cairo might be explained as the result of a compromise among the jurisprudents, who through *ijmā'* consensus, adopted the necessity of a caliph of Qurayshī descent at the head of the community.¹⁶⁹⁷ The '*ulamā'*' sought a governing system that encouraged the sultan to seek their counsel. In this way, the ruler could provide himself with what he generally lacked: access to religious knowledge and *ijtihād*. Mamlukists frequently discuss a

¹⁶⁹⁵ Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām*, 6:356.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 6:359. See also: Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 160 note 432.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Laoust, *Essai*, 45. While many assumed Mamluk jurists (since the time of Baybars) to be predominantly Shāfi'ī, jurists from the east fleeing the Mongols may also have influenced a rise of Ḥanafism in the late thirteenth/early fourteenth centuries as the Ḥanafī rite gained stature in Cairo. The Ḥanafī school may also have lent itself more favorably to Mamluk manipulation of *waqf* properties during the fourteenth century. See: Joseph H. Escovitz, *The Office of Qādī al-Quḍāt in Cairo under the Bahārī Mamlūks* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984), 148-54, 210-4.

functional “symbiosis” between the sultans and ‘*ulamā*’, a relationship that the latter were interested in legally framing.¹⁶⁹⁸ Accepting, as we must, the reality that the Abbasid caliphs were a source of Mamluk legitimacy, the importance of the caliphate had bearing on any juristic discussion of the sultan as *imām* or otherwise. Thus the jurists, for the most part, maintained the caliphate in accordance with its theoretical place in the Mamluk hierarchy while clearing the way for the sultans to fully carry out the classical duties of the imamate and claim authority over all people of Islam. As a result, writers -- Ibn Khaldūn in particular -- did away with many of the stipulations that discouraged an interpretation of the sultan as acting *imām*. In discussions of the imamate, the jurists included qualities, duties, and an access to power possessed exclusively by the contemporary Mamluk sultan, such as the ability to enforce justice and lead *jihād*.

It is helpful to consider the development of politics outlined by al-Ghazālī in that the government structure had become a balance between the sultan, the caliph, and the ‘*ulamā*’. The ‘*ulamā*’ largely prospered in Mamluk Egypt, and were unwilling to jeopardize the system that provided them with governmental appointments and a free hand in affairs of religion. It behooved the ‘*ulamā*’ to buttress, praise, and legitimize the regime that protected their interests. Many realized that the Mamluks were purveyors of *mulk*, as opposed to true or prophetic caliphate (*khilāfat al-nubuwwa*), but offered recognition on the grounds that the Mamluks were the protectors of the caliphate (such as it was), which increasingly resembled a talisman or inanimate holy relic. This is rather a different situation than the Asharite writers of tenth and eleventh century Mesopotamia, who sought to protect the historical caliphate from the encroachments of the Shiite Buyid amirs and the Seljuq sultans. Despite the vicissitudes of Mamluk politics, Egypt was practically a sanctuary for Muslim scholars and a caliph with an undefined religious authority posed no immediate threat to their authority. Put differently, the scholarly elite recognized the favorable situation they enjoyed and did their best to enshrine the existing political order and present it as an acceptable norm.

Conclusion

Awareness of attitudes among the contemporary intelligentsia is essential in understanding how the caliphate had evolved by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Many of

¹⁶⁹⁸ Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1967), 130-42; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-‘Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqālānī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 85; Yaacov Lev, “Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1-26. The prospect that the symbiosis between Mamluk *siyāsa* and Islamic law was subject to changing times has been recently explored. See: Yossef Rapoport, “Royal Justice and Religious Law: *Siyāsah* and Shari‘ah under the Mamluks,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 16 (2012): 75-81.

the authors discussed in this chapter focused on what the office *ought* to be and the functions it should fulfill. Earlier works from the Mamluk period by al-Qarāfī and the unknown author of the *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāya* had not yet experienced the newly resurrected caliphate in the Mamluk sultanate, and their authors wrote standard treatises reflecting concerns that the caliphate should not disrupt the burgeoning cooperation between the sultanate and the ‘*ulamā*’. Later authors wrote ambiguously of an indefinite, undefined “*imām*” and held an assortment of views about the necessity of his descent from the Quraysh. Most authors, however, were predisposed toward accepting the Mamluk political and religious hierarchy that theoretically held the Abbasid caliphate at the peak of its structure.

Modern researchers may be justified in dismissing Mamluk period political writing in light of how few innovations appear to have been made on the theoretical position of the caliphate since the Buyid and Seljuq periods. Mu’tazilism had been successfully suppressed by the tenth century. By the fourteenth century, the Asharite position that the imamate was necessary by religious mandate as opposed to mere reason had won over the majority of ‘*ulamā*’. Indeed, the treatises of the Mamluk period seem to say more about the enduring influence of al-Māwardī than the true position of the modern caliphate in relation to the sultanate.

Some writers of the Mamluk period chose to deemphasize the stipulation that the caliph or *imām* be a Qurayshī descendant or that the acting leader receive delegation of power from such an *imām*.¹⁶⁹⁹ Al-Nuwayrī and al-Qalqashandī passively compiled the statements of earlier scholars who argued for Qurayshī descent and implied that it was the widespread expectation of the scholarly class, while Ibn Khaldūn, perhaps writing in favor of his patron, the Mamluk sultan Barqūq (whose difficult relationship with the caliph al-Mutawakkil was common knowledge), delivered an important refutation of the need for Qurayshī descent on grounds that it had become superfluous.

Previous scholarship has concluded that the juridical tradition on the imamate struggled to keep up with the political realities on the ground and redefined their position on the caliphate as *ad hoc* apologia for the changing nature of the institution. As one modern historian observed, Sunni political theory slowly shifted to deemphasize the caliphate and ultimately recognized “the sultan and the scholar as key figures in the Muslim political order,” which seems to be an accurate encapsulation of a trend identified by al-Ghazālī.¹⁷⁰⁰ Yet the caliphate did not vanish or cease to have implications for the political order.

¹⁶⁹⁹ Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 12.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Amalia Levanoni, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Account of the Transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate: History in the Service of Faith,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 104.

Although the caliphate appears to have been divested of all of its former authority, it is hard to believe that the jurist and qadi Ibn Jamā'a and the staunch traditionalist Ibn Taymiyya would abruptly abandon the preceding tradition of thought on the imamate to accommodate a new political reality.¹⁷⁰¹ Even the practical-minded Ibn Khaldūn, while acknowledging that the Abbasids of Cairo had naught but the name "caliph," refrained from taking the final step to say the caliphate was no longer relevant or obligatory. There is every reason to suspect that these authors saw the sultan and his subordinates (in the presence of a presiding caliph) as fulfilling the classical duties of the imamate. While the caliphate persisted in an undefined and largely symbolic capacity, it remained an institution which served a purpose and held a non-specific authority that Mamluk authorities could not suppress or ignore.¹⁷⁰²

There is truth to the notion that the majority of Sunni jurists of the period sought to enshrine the Mamluk status quo by providing recognition of the official government hierarchy and legitimizing the ideological claims and pretensions of the Mamluk sultans. As Haarmann noted, the consequential relationship in place between the Mamluk elite and the civilian population, of which the jurists and '*ulamā*' were a part, allowed Mamluk governance to largely escape criticism from the many jurists and doctors of the law.¹⁷⁰³

Authors such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn longed for a return to the caliphate of the Rāshidūn, though the "30 years ḥadīth" of the Prophet afforded them a quiet pragmatism and acceptance of the *mulk* of the Mamluk sultans. Both authors agreed that the post-Rāshidūn caliphal dynasties had been a kind of "royalty," which explains how they viewed the contrast between al-Māwardī's theory of the caliphate and the way in which it differed from their reality.¹⁷⁰⁴

Al-'Umarī, al-Qalqashandī, Abū Hāmid al-Qudṣī, Khunjī, and al-Suyūfī, because of the caliphal presence in the capital, described Mamluk Cairo as an idealized heartland of Islam, unspoiled by depredations in which scholars were free to perfect themselves, their craft, and offer instruction to disciples. There may be some parallels between the nostalgia among the '*ulamā*' for what might be described as the Hodgsonian "High Caliphate"¹⁷⁰⁵ and Plato's Ideal City, absorbed into Islamdom through al-Fārābī's *al-Madīnat al-fāḍila* and further explored in al-Ṭūsī's

¹⁷⁰¹ Hassan, "Modern Interpretations," 339-43.

¹⁷⁰² This is not to suggest that the sultans were uninterested in scaling back the caliphate. Heidemann interpreted Baybars's removal of the caliphs' names from the coinage as proof of the sultan's interest in phasing out the caliphate entirely. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 179.

¹⁷⁰³ Haarmann, "Injustice of the Turks," 62.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Sourdel, "Khalīfa."

¹⁷⁰⁵ On Hodgson's so-called "High Caliphate" (692-945), see: *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1:231-40.

Nasirean Ethics. The Prophetic caliphate and High caliphate were the Islamic form of government *par excellence*, always sought after in the treatises and alluded to in some advice literature but never attained exactly. One wonders if a kind of neo-platonism conditioned scholars like Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn to expect the bare minimum from the Mamluks and merely deem the existing political system as sufficient, or at the very least, not entirely bad. Indeed, the caliphate was never just one man, and served as shorthand for the collective governing apparatus -- a prospect which likely made the *'ulamā'* less dissatisfied with the contemporary state of affairs in which the Abbasid caliph of Cairo was a pale shadow of his "rightly-guided" predecessors.

Recent doctoral research has argued persuasively that minor indications, such as Ibn Jamā'a's insistence on Qurayshī lineage and Ibn Taymiyya and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's tacit acceptance of a Mamluk ruling hierarchy capped by the caliph, implies some juristic recognition of the theoretical position of the Abbasid caliphate which delegated affairs to the Mamluk sultan.¹⁷⁰⁶ We may also add to this Ibn Khaldūn's reserved acknowledgment of the Cairo Abbasids, both in the *Muqaddima* and its accompanying chronicle. Reevaluation of the previous conclusion that Mamluk period literature, in an extreme departure from Sunni political tradition, sought to "destroy" the relevance of the caliphate, has been long absent.

There may have been pressure on writers linked to the regime to avoid an explicit definition of what the caliph's role should be, lest it be detrimental to the sultan's position. As a result, many often enshrined the official Mamluk version of the investiture ceremony into their treatises and accepted the premise of the caliph's delegation of authority to the sultan as a point of departure.

This lacuna has allowed many recent studies to conclude that there was no general acceptance of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo by the jurists. At the very least we must adjust this conclusion to say that many jurists *accepted* the Mamluk political hierarchy as a whole, including the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo. No jurist or writer would have openly challenged the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliphate so critical to Mamluk ideology and the regime's projection of itself as protector of Islam, Muslims, and the caliphate. With the caliphal office as such an important symbol of *sharī'a* and classical government, it would be puzzling if not bizarre for Mamluk jurists to attack its obligatory nature. There is no doubt that the *'ulamā'* outfitted the Mamluks with legitimacy, and in the context of their rule, the caliph was partially recast as a scholar and

¹⁷⁰⁶ Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 154-70.

private citizen, rather than the traditional “*imām*” described in the treatises of al-Māwardī or even Ibn Jamā‘a.¹⁷⁰⁷

The Abbasid caliph, theoretically perched atop the hierarchy of the “men of the turban,” suffered from a poorly-defined role in the Mamluk period which the officeholders merely stumbled through. Few jurists and authors of treatises of the Mamluk caliphate addressed the expectations for the office in the age of sultans and *khushdāshiyya* politics. Rather than address a potentially controversial topic, they ignored it and chose instead to describe the classical caliphate, while elsewhere placing emphasis on the role of the sultan as *imām par excellence*, effectively alienating the incumbent Abbasid caliph from the traditional concept of *imāma*. Mamluk literature supports the idea that jurists did not favor an idealized leader for the imamate, and the office-holder, like most others in the medieval period, was highly disposable. In other words the office itself was paramount, far more than the man who held it.

¹⁷⁰⁷ On the reconfiguration of the caliph as a scholar (‘*ālim*) see Chapter 6.

Chapter Four: Contemporary Perspectives II: Mamluk Historiography and the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

General Characterization

Contemporary research suggests that many Mamluk chroniclers compiled their works in a milieu of increased self-consciousness, and cooperation between the ‘*ulamā*’ and the ruling class.¹⁷⁰⁸ Authors of historical works scrutinized the governing classes and allowed the ‘*ulamā*’ to figure more prominently in the historical narrative through biography. The Mamluk period witnessed new developments in historiography such as the appearance of the *dhayl*, a sequel or supplement to a famous known work of history, as well as the importance attached to biographical notices and necrologies as a significant appendage to the annals.¹⁷⁰⁹

Histories penned by the religious elite permitted a version of their proper, *sharī‘a*-compliant worldview. So-called “*siyāsa*-oriented historiography,” characterizing Arabic historical writings of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, is distinct for its tendency to focus heavily on issues of governance and a ruler’s ability to preserve the polity.¹⁷¹⁰ On the other hand, such historical writing may have been predisposed towards deemphasizing the theological considerations at the core of “*sharī‘a*-oriented” historiography. Historians of the latter genre often took pains to burnish immediate didactic meanings from the historical narrative, all the better to underscore God’s authority and Islam’s veracity before the community. Some modern researchers have thus depicted medieval Islamic historiography as a battleground in which historians such as Ibn al-‘Ibrī (*Bar Hebraeus*) and Ibn Khaldūn (*siyāsa* historian *par excellence*) are among the writers who championed focusing on the holders of power while writers like Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256) and Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 691/1292) wished to retain a “religiously-oriented wisdom

¹⁷⁰⁸ Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 191-2. Common goals of the ‘*ulamā*’ and rulers included supporting and strengthening each others’ respective class and position in society, as well as more immediate gains such as the perpetuation and spread of the pious endowment (*waqf*) system. See: Lev, “Symbiotic Relations,” 24-6.

¹⁷⁰⁹ See: Li Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies: The State of the Art,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 34; R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 187-208; Donald P. Little, “Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 413.

¹⁷¹⁰ On the role of Mamluk *siyāsa* as a force for “guidance” intended to maintain the masses and usher in social prosperity and stability, see: Albrecht Fuess, “Mamluk Politics,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 95.

history.” Modern experts envisage the Mamluk period as a high point in such *siyāsa*-oriented history, which finds its zenith in the Mamluk imperial bureaucratic chronicle.¹⁷¹¹

Like their Ayyubid predecessors, historians of the Mamluk epoch realized they were chronicling events of an unprecedented present.¹⁷¹² Indeed, a sense of wonderment and jubilation pervades the narratives of many chroniclers describing the 659/1261 investiture of an Abbasid in Cairo.

Mamluk chroniclers, steeped in the Islamic tradition, frequently composed annals of events in their own lifetimes subsequently appended to larger universal histories or general histories of Islam. With the office of the caliphate so central to the history of the community from the death of the Prophet onwards, many authors felt compelled to carry reports of it down to their own time. Indeed, regardless of the caliph’s diminished public role, Mamluk historians seldom failed to demonstrate awareness of the Abbasid caliphate in their coverage of contemporary events.¹⁷¹³

Historically Representing the Abbasid Caliphate

In his discussion of architecture and a Mamluk collective memory, Nasser Rabbat has commented upon the subtle or even subconscious influence which the establishment of the Cairo caliphate may have had upon Mamluk historical writing:

[The Mamluk state] had very swiftly defeated the Crusaders and Mongols, asserted its rule over all the Syro-Egyptian territories, and devised a new caliphal legitimacy with the installation of an Abbasid caliph in Cairo after the annihilation of the Baghdadi caliphate by the Mongols in 1258. The culture reacted to these Mamluk victories with renewed hope of recapturing the glorious past and reviving the true caliphate after two centuries of uncertainty, a feeling which lasted well into the fifteenth century. It was reflected in the reorientation of Mamluk historical writing towards a pan-Islamic outlook reminiscent of the writing of the eighth- and ninth-century historians who lived under an at least nominally unified Islamic world. Thus, an entire generation of Mamluk historians – including al-‘Umarī and al-Nuwayrī in

¹⁷¹¹ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 182-231 (esp. 193-8); Little, “Historiography,” 413; Amalia Levanoni, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Account of the Transition from Turkish to Circassian Mamluk Sultanate: History in the Service of Faith,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 102-5.

¹⁷¹² Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 184-6. Salient examples that predate the Mamluk period might include Ibn al-Athīr’s (d. 630/1233) coverage of the initial Mongol conquest of Islamic lands and Usāma ibn Munqidh’s (d. 584/1188) account of living amongst Crusaders or “Franks” (*al-Faranj*) in Jerusalem. See: Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-i‘tibār li-Usāma ibn Munqidh*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton, 1930), 132-41; ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1997), 10:333-5.

¹⁷¹³ This included (but was not limited to) naming the incumbent caliph at the top of each annal, mentioning the caliph’s presence at public events, or including anecdotes of the caliph’s involvement in Mamluk politics and society.

Cairo and Ibn Kathīr and al-Dhahabī in Damascus – adopted a universal and upbeat approach and covered the entire Islamic world in their writing.¹⁷¹⁴

Within the forms and structures of Mamluk historiography, the Abbasid caliphate proved vital as a precondition for organization. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Nubāta (father of the poet),¹⁷¹⁵ Muḥammad al-Damīrī,¹⁷¹⁶ al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Duqmāq, al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Suyūfī and many others penned caliphal histories of varying length organized by the reigns of individual caliphs.¹⁷¹⁷ Several chroniclers, including Ibn Khaldūn, frequently broke their continuous narrative format to devote separate sections to the detailing of events connected to the caliphate or simply to announce the succession of a new caliph. Beginning new annals by naming the reigning Abbasid caliph for that year was a well known convention among Islamic historians even before the Mamluk period. For the years between 656-9/1258-61, when no caliph reigned, some chroniclers simply noted that the year began “while the Muslims were without a caliph.”¹⁷¹⁸ Permitting the Abbasid caliphate to impose order on the way historiographers approached their craft further demonstrates the critical importance Mamluk society attached to the office and its holder. Like their predecessors, Mamluk chroniclers were committed to recording minutiae about the caliphs such as disparities in lineage, the

¹⁷¹⁴ Nasser O. Rabbat, “Perception of Architecture in Mamluk Sources,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 6 (2002): 162; idem, *Mamluk History through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 24. On the early caliphate and Mamluk collective memory, see: Heather Keaney, “The First Islamic Revolt in Mamlūk Collective Memory: Ibn Bakr’s (d. 1340) Portrayal of the Third Caliph ‘Uthmān,” in *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam*, ed. Sebastian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 378-400.

¹⁷¹⁵ The title of the book is *al-Iktifā’ min ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*. (See: *GAL* Suppl. 2:47). The third volume covers the Abbasids of Baghdad from the caliph al-Muttaqī (329-33/940-4) up to the author’s lifetime, including the first three Cairo Abbasids; al-Mustanṣir, al-Ḥākim, and al-Mustakfī, followed by the Fatimids. According to the colophon, it is possible that the work was prepared for and presented to one of the caliphs of Cairo. I thank Thomas Bauer for sharing his information about this work.

¹⁷¹⁶ The Egyptian encyclopedist Muḥammad al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405-6) digressed into a history of the caliphs in his entry on the goose (*al-iwazz*) in his encyclopedia of animals. For al-Damīrī’s coverage of the Abbasids of Cairo down to al-Musta’in, see: *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā* (Cairo, 1956), 1:124-6. See also: Joseph de Somogyi, “A History of the Caliphate in the *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* of al-Damīrī,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 8, no. 1 (1935): 143-55.

¹⁷¹⁷ Several caliphal histories and other works appeared shortly after the Mamluk period and include chronological biographies of the Cairo caliphs: Aḥmad al-Qaramānī’s *Akḥbār al-duwal wa-athār al-uwal fī al-ta’rīkh*, Mar’ī ibn Yūsuf Karmī’s *Nuzhat al-nāzirīn fī Ta’rīkh man waliya Miṣr min al-khulafā’ wa-al-salāfīn* and Talkhīṣ awṣāf al-Muṣṭafā wa-dhikr man ba’dahu min al-khulafā’, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṭulūnī’s *al-Nuzha al-saniyya fī akḥbār al-khulafā’ wa-al-mulūk al-Miṣriyya*, and surely many others I am unaware of.

¹⁷¹⁸ P. M. Holt, “Some Observations on the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate of Cairo,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 507; Mona F. Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate: The Trauma and Aftermath of 1258 and 1924” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 143-6.

establishment of various precedents, unique given names, origins for regnal titles, and the longest and shortest caliphal reigns.¹⁷¹⁹

Regardless of vocation or opinion, there appears to have been some uniformity among Mamluk historians regarding the importance of preserving and continuing the line of Abbasid caliphs. Even in instances in which historians described a caliph as little more than a prisoner of the regime, they expressed an awareness of the theoretical notion that the sultans were lieutenants of the caliph and acting in his name. Invested with powers delegated to them by the Commanders of the Faithful, the sultans were tasked with the prodigious burden of controlling the affairs of Muslims. No author ever explicitly expressed the situation in terms of the caliphs, as representatives of an anachronistic institution, merely providing a crass legitimization of the Mamluk sultans. Indeed, only in modern times are scholars at liberty to surmise that insecure slave-kings exploited the Abbasid family to provide a faith-based gloss to their oligarchy. Whether or not the scholars of the Mamluk era *agreed* with this estimation, all but a few refrained from even approaching the subject.

To their dismay, many authors of the Mamluk period fully recognized that the contemporary caliphs (separate and distinct from their revered office) were a far cry from their distant idealized predecessors of the early Islamic period. Even so, as authors of history, they could scarcely ignore the prevailing political climate. For example, Baḥrī Mamluk historians, almost universally, failed to provide coverage of the career of the caliph al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh (661-701/1262-1302) prior to his arrival in Cairo. A likely theory contends that Egyptian authors like Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, and Baybars al-Manṣūrī could not acknowledge that al-Ḥākim had been recognized as a caliph *before* reaching Cairo lest the legitimacy of Baybars’ subsequent “official” investiture be challenged.¹⁷²⁰ Finding nothing to be gained by endangering the status quo, most historians passed over this inconvenient fact in silence.¹⁷²¹

¹⁷¹⁹ The historian al-Yūnīnī includes al-Ḥākim in a group of Abbasid caliphs such as al-Saffāh and al-Manṣūr whose ancestors had not been caliphs. See: *Dhayl*, 2:187. Ibn Kathīr lists all the brothers (rather than sons) who inherited the Abbasid caliphate and elsewhere surveys the shortest reigns of the Umayyads and Abbasids in light of the brief reign of al-Mustanṣir of Cairo. See: *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta’rīkh* (Beirut, 1966), 13:231-2. Al-Qalqashandī devoted whole sections of his encyclopedias to bizarre trivia pertaining to the caliphal dynasties: *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā’* (Cairo, 1963), 1:439-45, idem, *Ma’āthir al-ināfa fī ma’ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964), 3:334-74. See also: Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī ta’rīkh ahl al-zamān: ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 1:349.

¹⁷²⁰ Stefan Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 18-9.

¹⁷²¹ Ibid., 72. Contemporary Syrian authors such as Abū Shāma and Ibn Wāṣil avoided the issue while al-Qalqashandī went as far as to say that al-Ḥākim had little pre-history prior to his arrival in Cairo.

If the Mamluks endeavored to Islamize their administration through courting the religious class, the latter were likewise aware that they had much to gain from lending their support to the regime, whether lucrative careers, new opportunities to please God by serving the *umma*, or (most likely) a combination of both. Ripples of the symbiosis emerge in the historiography of both bureaucrats and religious scholars. Many writers, intentionally or not, disseminated the view of history the sultans sought to promote, or one which cast them above all as protectors of Islam and the caliphate. As one modern historian observed, the '*ulamā*' themselves, as Sunni Muslim theologians (and in some cases, historians), "conceived of Muslim government as a condominium of the moral authority of the Caliph and the effective powers of the sultans."¹⁷²²

Regional and Occupational Considerations

In the Mamluk period, clusters of historians emerged in geographic locales, usually urban centers, and often among students of the same teacher. Among the most noteworthy are the group of histories written by '*ulamā*' in Syria in the early fourteenth century and the historians based in Cairo in the fifteenth century, counting bureaucrats and religious scholars among their respective ranks.¹⁷²³

Organizing studies of Mamluk historiography into regional groupings has proven useful in mapping similarities in the works that suggest the influence of similar backgrounds. In greater Cairo, the heart of the Mamluk Empire, claims and propaganda involving the Abbasid caliphate appear to have been the most vociferous. Modern scholars have identified a distinct Egyptocentrism to the works produced by the Cairo-based Arabic-speaking historians of the later fifteenth century.¹⁷²⁴ For these authors, Cairo was nothing less than the "*umm al-dunyā*," the center of the world dwarfing all others in contemporary Islamdom. It was not so farfetched that Cairo should be the seat of the restored caliphate -- after all, there was the precedent of the Fatimids. After the loss of Baghdad, many '*ulamā*' touted Cairo as the new cultural and religious capital of the Sunni world. The intense coverage of the Abbasids among later Cairo-based historians indicates that the caliphs were a natural part of everyday life in Egypt. Despite different perspectives, interest in the Abbasid caliphate endured among historians, implying broad

¹⁷²² Levanoni, "Al-Maqrīzī's Account," 104.

¹⁷²³ Medieval sources, particularly those produced in Mamluk Cairo tend to have an urban bias. Many of the authors were city-dwelling jurists, scholars, and government servicemen with interests often limited to the situation in Cairo. See: Jonathan P. Berkey, "Culture and Society During the Late Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume I, Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 384-5.

¹⁷²⁴ Konrad Hirschler, "Studying Mamluk Historiography: From Source-Criticism to the Cultural Turn," in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 169-71.

acceptance of at least the idea of the caliph's authority within relevant social circles of Egypt at large.

Despite a wealth of contemporary sources, it remains more difficult to appreciate the resonance of Abbasid authority in early fourteenth century Mamluk Syria. Religious scholars who also wrote history were more oriented towards the totality of Islamic history, particularly its origins, and their interests transcended the immediate realities of the Mamluk world.¹⁷²⁵ Nevertheless, their works betray many hints of how people in their province accepted and received the holders of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo.

The organization of this chapter reflects occupational and geographical considerations among a select group of authors, while acknowledging that any such grouping is tentative at best. It is dangerous to attempt to shoehorn authors into watertight categories or assume that a shared vocation or environment implied identical attitudes about religio-political institutions such as the caliphate.¹⁷²⁶ Nevertheless, it is tempting to question whether commonalities and a frequent reliance on similar sources contributed to some kind of consensus about the Abbasid caliphate, particularly among authors steeped in daily interaction with Mamluk court culture or contact with the caliphs themselves. Here, it is important to remain cautiously attuned to the cultural currents and trends in which historians were steeped and which played a role in their developing thought and writing.¹⁷²⁷

The following survey in the present chapter does not pretend to be an exhaustive examination of every historian of the Mamluk period. Rather, the focus is on a sampling of authors who present discernable insight into the Cairo caliphate. While many Mamluk authors offer little if any such insight into the institution, others have written enough on the contemporary caliphate to make their collective writings, whether historical asides or specialized biographical entries, a worthwhile focus for study.

Discipline, geography, and chronology are mere points of departure in a search for patterns amongst groupings of authors. Later writers certainly had the advantage of hindsight, nostalgia, and first-hand experience of the Cairo caliphate to ruminate upon, whereas the majority of authors who died prior to or during the 730/1330s tended to discuss only Baybars and the first two investiture ceremonies in Cairo. By the early sixteenth century, however, authors such as al-

¹⁷²⁵ Here I have benefited from remarks made by Professor R. Stephen Humphreys on my 2011 Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) paper on Abbasid authority in Cairo.

¹⁷²⁶ Nasser Rabbat pointed to disappointing conclusions in an analysis of *awlād al-nās* historians and their failure to expose insider insight into the "Mamluk experience." See: "Representing the Mamluks in Mamluk Historical Writing," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (C. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 59-75.

¹⁷²⁷ Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 135.

Suyūṭī and Ibn Iyās had the potential to provide wide-ranging analyses spanning nearly two and a half centuries of a uniquely Cairene Abbasid tradition.

In view of the paucity of material it is difficult to undertake a true *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* of the Mamluk period. While it is true that our only sources were penned by members of the bureaucratic class and religious intelligentsia who seldom spoke for the masses, their wide array of vocations offers a valuable variety of perspective and presentation.¹⁷²⁸ Nevertheless, our information on popular sentiment and the caliphate at large must be filtered through the lens of their (somewhat) privileged world. To transcend such a limiting notion, however, it is worth remembering that many Mamluk chroniclers were also privy to unique sources of information. Facts which worked their way into the historiography reflect the exclusive experience and proximity to real power enjoyed by members of the scholarly, administrative, and military classes.

A. Bureaucrat Historians

Bureaucrats working in the nascent Mamluk administration, particularly the chancery, were in an excellent position to write histories supplemented by access to both rulers and documents pertaining to their rule. In some cases a former *kātib al-sirr* who had drafted the relevant documents might insert them into a work of history to illustrate the career of a given sultan or remind the reader of his own involvement or achievement.¹⁷²⁹

Historians of the Ayyubid era had been overwhelmingly Syrian, but a spike in Egyptian historiography occurred in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and yet again in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁷³⁰ Chancery officials serving the earliest Bahṛī sultans had the opportunity to serve as court historians and were commissioned to pen royal biographies in praise of the rulers.¹⁷³¹ Later writers drew heavily on the work of these authors for the early years of the sultanate. Such regnal histories, inclining towards favorable depictions of the sultan while

¹⁷²⁸ Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies," 29-32; Little, "Historiography," 413.

¹⁷²⁹ Chancery scribes slipped the text of documents into their historical writing, though often without original information such as dates. Authors varied between including the bulk of a document or only some details.

¹⁷³⁰ Little, "Historiography," 412. Some later Ayyubid historians such as Abū Shāma and Ibn Wāṣil continued on during the transitional period between the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras and although they retained sympathy to the Ayyubids, provide valuable coverage of the early decades of the Mamluk sultanate. For a reading of both historians with reference to their outlooks, see: Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006), 15-62.

¹⁷³¹ Guo, "Mamluk Historiographic Studies," 30. See also: P.M. Holt, "A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt," *English Historical Review* 101 (1986): 671-9.

suppressing unflattering information, often sought to present their subjects as paragons of Islamic leadership.¹⁷³²

1. Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (d. 692/1292)

No other early Mamluk author could boast of the intimacy that Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir shared with the earliest sultans. Although he was not the head of the Mamluk chancery at the time of the caliph al-Mustanṣir’s investiture by Baybars in Rajab 659/June 1261, his *Rawḍ al-zāhir* preserves the text of the document prepared and read by his predecessor Fakhr al-Dīn Luqmān (d. 693/1294).¹⁷³³

Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir presents the investiture of al-Mustanṣir as a good deed linked to the munificence of the Mamluk sultan.¹⁷³⁴ As an official royal biography, the work, while dominated at times by apologetic and propagandistic tones, carries the overwhelming sense that its author shared in the widespread mood of awe surrounding the public celebration of the revived caliphate. Presenting Baybars as a pillar of Islamic morals and comportment, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir praises the Mamluk sultan for his good behavior in the presence of the caliph, and even makes use of a topos describing how the eyes of Baybars filled with joyful tears at the caliph’s investiture ceremony.¹⁷³⁵ It was important for Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir to stress the physical and spiritual proximity of Baybars to the caliph. The *Rawḍ* emphasizes that Baybars was first to extend his hand to offer *bay‘a* and rode off beside him to Syria, orchestrating the entire affair himself.¹⁷³⁶ Likewise in the narrative, the sultan’s plan to “assist” the caliph in retaking Baghdad is presented as a meritorious act.

The author of the *Rawḍ*, having helped compose al-Mustanṣir’s official genealogy document, harbors no doubts about the Abbasid’s right to assume the caliphate. There is also an image of the Abbasid caliph’s eagerness to work with the Mamluk sultan to achieve common

¹⁷³² Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir was known to have read his work to Baybars who then gifted the author with expensive robes. It is difficult to say who Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s audience was as manuscripts were sparse and not widely available.

¹⁷³³ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 101-10. On Fakhr al-Dīn Luqmān, see: Yūsuf ibn Taghrībī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi ba‘da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa‘īd ‘Ashūr (Cairo, 1984-93), 1:136-8; al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 3:254-6; Heideman, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 101. This text is preserved as far as we know. There is no surviving copy of the original document.

¹⁷³⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 99-101. This appears to be in line with Holt’s thesis that the purpose of royal biography was two-fold; emphasis of a ruler’s Islamic credentials and publicizing them as a paragon of Islamic virtue. See: P. M. Holt, “The Virtuous Ruler in Thirteenth-Century Mamluk Royal Biographies,” in *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1980): 27-35; Amina A. Elbendary, “The Sultan, The Tyrant, and The Hero: Changing Medieval Perceptions of al-Zāhir Baybars,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 140-4.

¹⁷³⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 101; Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa‘īd ‘Ashūr (Cairo, 1956-73), 1:2:451.

¹⁷³⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 100.

interests: al-Mustanşir is ready to retake Baghdad with the support of Baybars, just as later on, al-Ḥākim would enthusiastically endorse the Mamluk sultan's wish to restore the *futuwwa* brotherhood for an unspecified purpose.¹⁷³⁷ Coverage of the proposed Iraq counterattack emphasizes the sultan's generous support of the caliph with men and money.¹⁷³⁸ Details of the actual campaign may have been unknown to Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, though he discusses its outcome. The *Rawḍ* would never betray the author's sculpted image of Baybars and as a result the caliph al-Mustanşir is represented as fatally deficient in common sense. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's assessment of the failed mission would rather assign blame to the caliph's impetuosity than the sultan's miscalculation or naïveté when his forces were withdrawn:

The caliph was rash and failed to summon the army that had gone to the Euphrates with the amir Sayf al-Dīn al-Rashīdī, so God ordained his death as a warrior in His cause [...] One cannot oppose the fates, and victory lies with God. When God intends a thing, He accomplishes it, and "it may be that you dislike a thing, while it is good for you."¹⁷³⁹

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's fatalist pragmatism may have been a reflection of the sultan's own position on the affair, though elsewhere we are told that Baybars was profoundly troubled by what befell the caliph in Mongol-occupied Mesopotamia.¹⁷⁴⁰

Despite his vantage point as head of the chancery by 661/1262 and his direct participation in the investiture of al-Ḥākim, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's reports on the second Abbasid of Cairo tend to be lopsided. Due to a conflict of interests, we cannot expect an author closely linked to the political program of Baybars to comment on al-Ḥākim's period of "political vagabondage" and previous investitures as caliph by the sultan's competitors, but Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir also fails to mention the caliph's participation in the Baghdad campaign (under the direction of the amir Āqqūsh al-Barlī).¹⁷⁴¹ Instead, the *Rawḍ* abruptly opens a section on the new caliph's mysterious arrival in Cairo, followed directly by a description of his investiture ceremony in 661/1262.¹⁷⁴² There is no mentioning that al-Ḥākim, previously recognized as caliph in Aleppo, languished in confinement for nearly a year after his arrival in Cairo before Baybars needed him.

For his part in the second investiture, Mamluk authorities commissioned Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir to compile a genealogy for the new caliph using interviews with al-Ḥākim and his traveling companions. Compared to the hyperbolic account of Cairo's first Abbasid ceremony, the author's

¹⁷³⁷ Ibid., 145-7.

¹⁷³⁸ Ibid., 110-2.

¹⁷³⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 112; Qur'ān, 2:216.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Cf. Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manşūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 68.

¹⁷⁴¹ See the discussion of these events above, pp. 41-2.

¹⁷⁴² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 141.

coverage of the *bay'a* for al-Ḥākim is succinct, subdued, and almost anticlimactic. The absence of grandeur surrounding the affair comes as little surprise given Baybars's investiture at the hands of an Abbasid caliph less than a year before.¹⁷⁴³

For the remainder of Baybars's reign, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir provides little information about al-Ḥākim's sequestration or the motives behind it. Suppression of the caliph extended through the reign of Qalāwūn covered by the author's *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa-al-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*. Although Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir died several months before the death of Qalāwūn's successor al-Ashraf Khalīl, his third and final royal history, *al-Alṭāf al-khaṭīyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sultāniyya al-Malakiyya al-Ashrafiyya* covers a substantial portion of the young sultan's three-year reign. The author devotes a lengthy passage to the sultan's reinvigoration of the caliph's career in 690/1291.¹⁷⁴⁴ As had been done for Baybars and Qalāwūn, there was every attempt to cultivate a favorable image of the sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, who labored with not having been his father's chosen successor. The depiction of a filial relationship between the young sultan and the elderly caliph may have been an attempt to show that al-Ashraf Khalīl was invested in the traditions and legacy of the regime established by Baybars as well as the religious symbolism embodied by the Abbasid caliphate.¹⁷⁴⁵

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's writings leave no doubt that by the late thirteenth century the sultanate had assumed nearly all of the roles and functions of the classical caliphate. This continued a trend recognized by earlier jurists who observed how newly defined institutions, including the judiciary, the appointment of wazirs and amirs, as well as administrations to manage pilgrimage, taxes, and *jihād*, had slipped from the control of the caliph himself, yet all the while functioning as compartments of a "Caliphate" writ large.¹⁷⁴⁶ However, it was clear that by that time, the office of the sultanate represented the center of gravity for the entire regime.¹⁷⁴⁷

¹⁷⁴³ See the discussion of these events above, pp. 43-6.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Alṭāf al-khaṭīyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sultāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg, as *Ur Abd Allah b. Abd ez-Zāhir's Biografi över Sultanen el-Melik al-Aṣraf Ḥalīl. Arabisk Tāxt med Översättning, Inledning Ock Anmärkningur Utjiven*, (Lund, 1902), 1-19. On the pious tendencies of the sultan, see: Ulrich Haarmann, "Khalīl, al-malik al-ashraf ṣalāḥ al-dīn," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:964-5.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Ibid., 3. On this point see also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 187-8; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 45.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006), 25-67, 83-119, 127-198.

¹⁷⁴⁷ For a pertinent example, see Northrup's discussion of the investiture deed ('*ahd*) of Qalāwūn: *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 167-82. On the true influence enjoyed by the sultan, see: P. M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 2 (1975): 238-42.

The spectacles of caliphal investiture provided the sultanate with indispensable *sharīʿ* legitimacy. Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir’s sweeping metaphors imply a unique bond between caliphate and sultanate, indicating that the caliph was seen as much more than an appendage of the Mamluk ruler.

For one thing, dichotomies of black and white represent an important leitmotif of Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir’s treatment of the caliphate. As an illustration, the author of the *Rawḍ*, describing a Mamluk ceremony in a garden outside of Cairo, compares the sultan, dressed in his black turban and white robe of honor, to a full moon rising on a dark night. He is shown receiving a white horse with a black sash and trappings.¹⁷⁴⁸ Likewise, Baybars’s investiture document, that Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir preserved but did not compose, states that *jihād* is a deed which turns the black-lettered record of sins into pure white.¹⁷⁴⁹ Later in his *Alṭāf*, the author revisits the theme when comparing the aged caliph al-Ḥākim, dressed in his black Abbasid gown, to the dark iris of an eye. The Commander of the Faithful is juxtaposed with the young white-clad sultan, who becomes the eye’s sclera providing protection to the iris from all sides, as parts of a single eye.¹⁷⁵⁰

This metaphor is also striking for its implication that the two men thus comprised an inseparable dyad in which there was to be no disconnect. In the sultan, the caliph had a strong right arm leading the armies, while in return, the sultan received the *baraka* and divine blessings linked to the caliphate. In Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir’s design, neither of the two individuals was supposed to oppose the will of the other, acting instead as a harmonious whole.

Elsewhere, Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir likens al-Ashraf Khalīl to Alexander the Great with the caliph al-Ḥākim at his side, whom he describes as a modern day Khidr.¹⁷⁵¹ The purpose of comparing the sultan, preparing to undertake *jihād*, to the greatest known world conqueror is clear enough.¹⁷⁵² On the other hand, comparing the caliph to Khidr, the mystical guiding figure of divine wisdom and mentor to Moses whom Muslim exegetes believed was referenced in the Qurʾān,¹⁷⁵³ is likely an allusion to advisory sessions in which al-Ḥākim counseled al-Ashraf

¹⁷⁴⁸ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 101.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 107.

¹⁷⁵⁰ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 18. It is worth remembering that the Arabic word *ʿayn*, also means “the self, or a single person” again implying the unity of the black and white: caliph and sultan.

¹⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷⁵² On the use of “Alexander” as a title in the early Mamluk period, see: Denise Aigle, “Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām. Une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir,” *Studia Islamica* 97 (2003): 73-7.

¹⁷⁵³ Khidr is not mentioned by name in the Qurʾān, rather he is identified as one of God’s servants (*ʿabdan min ʿibādīnā*) possessing special knowledge (Qurʾān, 18:65). Qurʾān exegetes later identified the figure as Khidr and elaborated upon him in *tafsīr* and *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* literature. See, for examples, the works of Ismāʿīl ibn Kathīr: *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (Beirut, 1970), 5:302-22; idem, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (Beirut,

Khalīl. It perhaps also demonstrates recognition of the caliph's sanctity and spiritual power, a power deemed capable of summoning divine protection for the state in times of existential threat.¹⁷⁵⁴

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir also seems to sketch out what he considered to be an ideal relationship between a sultan and caliph. Above all, the sultan, formally acting on his behalf as his deputy, should protect the caliph and treat him generously, examples being Baybars's furnishing al-Mustanşir with wealth and a household, as well as al-Ashraf Khalīl's restoration of al-Ḥākim's caliphal honor and improvement of his living conditions.¹⁷⁵⁵

Tarif Khalidi describes Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir as a historian who emphasized *sharī'a* (as opposed to *siyāsa*) in his histories and desired a caliphate structured by the holy law of Islam.¹⁷⁵⁶ In his remarks on the contemporary Abbasids one can always note Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's deference to the caliphate, combined as it was, with a cautious acknowledgment that his first priority was in fact extolling the virtues of his immediate patrons, the Mamluk sultans. Simply put, there was no better way to project a sultan's piety and respect for Islamic tradition than discussing his proximity to the Abbasid caliph. While it is tempting to dismiss Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir as a panderer before power, he offers nonetheless what we might describe as a resonating "Mamluk" delineation of the caliphate.

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's narrative about the caliphate intrigues many modern researchers. There are questions about the lacunae in the backgrounds of al-Mustanşir and al-Ḥākim before arriving in Cairo, especially the latter who had already enjoyed a storied military and political career. Baybars may well have become concerned about al-Mustanşir and al-Ḥākim's lingering prestige in parts of Syria and Mesopotamia and the possibility that their former supporters might someday pose a threat to him.¹⁷⁵⁷ As a countermeasure, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, perhaps attuned to his

2005), 5:812-41. See also: A. J. Wensinck, "al-Khaḍir (al-Khiḍr)," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:902-5.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's analogy linking the caliph to Khiḍr is also reminiscent of the *taqlīd* for Baybars which states that God placed the caliph beside the sultan to serve as a guide and *imām*. See: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 107.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 110-12; idem, *Alṭāf*, 3-6.

¹⁷⁵⁶ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 195.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Several scholars have explored Baybars's possible anxieties over the influence of al-Mustanşir. See: Peter Thorau, *Sultan Baibars I. von Ägypten: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vorderen Orients im 13. Jahrhundert*, "Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients" (1987), translated by P. M. Holt as *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1992), 114-6; Holt, "Some Observations," 501-3; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 59; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 145-51; Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 340-2; idem, "Legitimität durch Erzählung: Ayyubidsche und kalifale Legitimation mamlukischer Herrschaft in der populären *Sīrat Baibars*," in *Die Mamlūken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann*,

task as ideological architect and spokesman for the regime of Baybars and his successors, seems to advance the idea that there can be no caliphate without a sultanate to protect it.¹⁷⁵⁸ Once the caliph entrusts responsibility to the sultan, the residual caliphate can exist with the sultanate as a combined entity. It is thus that Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir encourages a reconfiguration of the schema which demands that the caliphate and sultanate be two alternating or even competing moieties rather than a singly bound authority in line with earlier thinkers such as al-Ghazālī.

2. Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī (d. 730/1330)

The Mamluk bureaucrat and chancery scribe Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī similarly penned royal histories of Baybars, Qalāwūn, and his two sons al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹⁷⁵⁹ It is perhaps unsurprising that Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī’s brisk account of the first Abbasid investiture ceremonies lacks the in-the-moment excitement captured by his uncle Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir. Given his predilection for indicating his own participation at key historical events, it seems likely that Shāfi‘ was not himself an eye-witness (nor old enough to be one).¹⁷⁶⁰

Writing as a scribe for Qalāwūn’s chancery, Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī loyally defended his patron from allegations that he had usurped the sultanate from his wards, the two sons of Baybars.¹⁷⁶¹ The restoration of the Abbasid caliphate had been a watershed moment in the early reign of Baybars, but for the duration of Qalāwūn’s reign it was left to languish. Shāfi‘ carefully avoided explaining *why* the caliphate had been left on the sideline. But with Baybars safely dead, he allowed himself the luxury of critically reviewing the former sultan’s legacy.¹⁷⁶²

Discussing Baybars’s decision to arm al-Mustanṣir against the Mongols, Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī does not disguise his amazement that the sultan should send the caliph at the head of an inferior force, claiming that all the armies of Egypt and Syria would scarcely be sufficient.¹⁷⁶³ Such

1942-1999, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2003), 263-4; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 132.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 110-2; idem, *Alḥāf*, 18.

¹⁷⁵⁹ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī also composed *Nazm al-sulūk*, a lost third work which has partially survived in the history of Ibn al-Furāt. See: Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Ideological and Diplomatic Relations with Mongol and Turkic Rulers of the Near East and Central Asia (658-807/1260-1405)” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001), 312.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *Husn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaza‘a min al-sīra al-Zāhiriyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 37. Shāfi‘ did not enjoy employment at the same level until his uncle Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir helped him enter the chancery as a scribe.

¹⁷⁶¹ See: Linda S. Northrup, “A History of the Reign of the Mamluk Sultan, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)” (PhD diss., McGill University, 1982), 19, 24-7; P. M. Holt, “The Presentation of Qalāwūn by Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī,” in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, Charles Issawi, Roger Savory and A. L. Udovitch (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 143-4.

¹⁷⁶² Holt, “Three Biographies of al-Zahir Baybars,” 26-7.

¹⁷⁶³ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 45.

remarks, however, came in the 690/1290s, long after the Mongols had consolidated their domain in Iran and Iraq. This led Holt to the likely conclusion that Shāfi‘ had assumed, with only slight justification, that Mongol strength was as formidable thirty years earlier as it was in his own day.¹⁷⁶⁴

In *al-Faḍl al-ma‘thūr min sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, his history of Qalāwūn, Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī sought to establish the sultan as an exemplary Muslim ruler and absolve him of wrongdoing in his ascent to power.¹⁷⁶⁵ There is scarcely mention of the reigning caliph al-Ḥākim apart from documents used by Qalāwūn to appease rebellious Syrian amirs. The absence of the Abbasid caliphate in *Faḍl al-ma‘thūr* and indeed in the reign of its subject, may have been connected to Qalāwūn’s desire to inflate his own spiritual significance as sultan.¹⁷⁶⁶ Through the author’s own activities as an administrator for Qalāwūn, Shāfi‘ may well have sensed that his master’s neglect of the Abbasid caliphate was grounded in its association with Baybars. For his own part, Qalāwūn was mostly interested in advancing his own image as a sovereign capable of ruling by virtue of his own deeds and by the successful prosecution of holy war.

In spite of the constraints placed on him, Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī’s greatest contribution to the historiography of the Cairo caliphate is a literary snapshot of the Abbasid family that glosses over some thirty years of seclusion from the Mamluk political scene.¹⁷⁶⁷ In it, he discusses their living conditions, income, and what he understands to have been their abasement resulting from fraternization with common Cairenes:

In the beginning, the caliph had been permitted to come and go as he pleased [...] The sultan grew apprehensive about the situation and barred him from attending gatherings and guarded his door for two years. When Malik al-Manṣūr Lājīn took power [in 696/1296], he removed the caliph from the citadel and settled him in the district of al-Kabsh where he and his children became one with the common folk, riding in the markets, gathering with the masses, and otherwise debasing their sanctity (*tahalhalat ḥurmatahum*).¹⁷⁶⁸ The caliph married the daughter of Malik al-Nāṣir Dāwūd, master of al-Karak, known as “Dār Dīnār” and who had acquired many landholdings on the shore of the canal (*shāṭi’ al-khalīj*) known to have belonged to amir Jamāl al-Dīn Āqqūsh al-Muḥammadī.¹⁷⁶⁹ The caliph rode out to see

¹⁷⁶⁴ Holt, “Some Observations,” 502. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 148.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Holt, “The Presentation of Qalāwūn by Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī,” 143, 148.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 175-6.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Husn*, 55.

¹⁷⁶⁸ On the caliph’s residence in al-Kabsh, see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:358-9; Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-i‘tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid (London, 2002), 3:444-6 (henceforth cited as *Khiṭaṭ*); Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i’ al-zuhūr fī waqā‘i’ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982-4), 1:1:320.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 134, 191. The “shore of the canal” may be a reference to the Nile peninsula near Rawḍā Island. The *khalīj* often refers to one of the canals of Cairo, but in this instance the author may be referring to the Khalīj al-Nāṣirī. Many amirs acquired palaces along the canal as well as on some of the lakes in Cairo. On the Khalīj al-Nāṣirī, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:481-4; on Khalīj Maṣr, see:

her, passing through throngs of common folk (*yushaqqā al-‘awwām*) until the end of his days.¹⁷⁷⁰

If anything, this passage, while possibly a critique, also indicates an abiding concern about the way the caliph and his household presented themselves in society. Moreover, it is a sign that Shāfi‘’s primary audience, the Mamluk establishment of the time, had a deep and enduring interest in the sayings and doings of the “Commander of the Faithful” that went well beyond his mere presence at investiture ceremonies. That the men around the sultan should care about Abbasid “sanctity” and veneration demonstrates that on some level, the Abbasid caliphate meant a lot more to Mamluk society than its role as a mere rubber stamp.¹⁷⁷¹ Baybars and Qalāwūn might have hidden the caliphate behind a screen for different reasons, but significantly never abolished it. In subsequent times, however, when relatively weaker men came to the sultanate, there would be efforts among the Mamluk authorities to remove the caliphate from its obscurity and restore the prominence and splendor it had enjoyed in the early years of Baybars.

B. Mamluk Military Historians

The work of two members of the political-military class who counted historical writing among their interests, permits another perspective on the Abbasid caliphate. They are the Mamluk officer Baybars al-Manṣūrī and the Ayyubid scion, delegated by the Abbasid caliph of Cairo, as “sultan” of Ḥamā, Ismā‘īl Abū al-Fidā’.¹⁷⁷²

1. Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325)

As a mamlūk of Qalāwūn, Baybars al-Manṣūrī held several official positions; *nā‘ib al-salṭana* of al-Karak, hospital overseer (*nāẓir al-bīmāristān*), as well as commander and chancery *dawādār* for his master’s son al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Both a military man and an exceptional student of knowledge, Baybars al-Manṣūrī represents a distinctive voice in Mamluk historiography. Access to the inner workings of the Mamluk state and its military made Baybars al-Manṣūrī an expert on government affairs.¹⁷⁷³ Moreover, he was a known Quranic exegete, and

Khīṭaṭ, 3:465-79. See also: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 55.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, *Ḥusn*, 55.

¹⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷² Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 148.

¹⁷⁷³ Donald P. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalā‘ūn* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1970), 6.

much of his work is said to retain a tone of piety, perhaps informed by an admiration of Sufism.¹⁷⁷⁴

For the early years of the Mamluk sultanate Baybars al-Manṣūrī closely followed the writing of Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir and mirrored much of the tone and presentation of that author in his universal chronicle *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta’rīkh al-hijra* as well as his shorter work, *al-Tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-Turkiyya*. While relying a great deal on *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, Baybars al-Manṣūrī frequently departs from its narrative to introduce his own experiences and eyewitness accounts, adding depth to coverage of later years.¹⁷⁷⁵ Like Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Baybars al-Manṣūrī describes the caliphal investiture as a testament to the piety and righteousness of the sultan Baybars.¹⁷⁷⁶ The author of the *Zubda* depicts the caliphate as an important link to the legacy of the Prophet:

The caliphate had fallen vacant since the murder of the *imām* al-Musta‘īm billāh so the sultan was pleased to rekindle its *raison d’être* (*bi-itiṣāl asbābihā*), renew its garments (*athwāb*), erect its beacon (*manār*), and display its emblems in order to solidify its foundation and link it to the Abbasid family as has been related in the prophetic promises to ensure that [the caliphate] remain time-honored and everlasting in this [Abbasid] lineage.¹⁷⁷⁷

Baybars al-Manṣūrī portrays the sultan Baybars as an emotional figure, bound by duty to the caliphate, claiming that Baybars had viewed the slaughter of al-Mustanṣir by the Mongols as a horrible calamity for the Muslim community and a personal failure for himself, for he had been unable to prevent it.¹⁷⁷⁸

Whereas Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir chastised the impetuosity of the caliph to protect the reputation of the sultan and Shāfi‘ questioned the sanity of Baybars, Baybars al-Manṣūrī judiciously avoided judging either party, limiting himself to musing how al-Mustanṣir calculated that an assault on Mongol territory might be feasible despite his reduced forces. The author then offers praise to both caliph and sultan for their service to the greater cause of Islam.¹⁷⁷⁹ For the

¹⁷⁷⁴ Eliyahu Ashtor, “Baybars al-Manṣūrī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:1127-8; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, xx; Robert Irwin, “Mamluk History and Historians,” in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, ed. Roger Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 163.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Northrup, *Slave to Sultan*, 36-7, 39; Little, “Historiography,” 423-4; Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 16-7. Baybars al-Manṣūrī arrived in Egypt in 659/1261 (the year of the first caliphal investiture) and was thus not a likely attendee.

¹⁷⁷⁶ Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-turkiyya: ta’rīkh dawlat al-mamālīk al-baḥriyya fī al-fatra min 648-711 hijriyya* (Cairo, 1987), 47-9.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60.

¹⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.* See also: Thorau, *Lion of Egypt*, 115.

author of course, it was the piety of the Mamluk sultan that saved the caliphate a second time with his subsequent investiture of al-Ḥākim.¹⁷⁸⁰

Competing interests and loyalties influenced the historical voice of Baybars al-Manṣūrī. At different times he could be a dedicated Muslim recognizing God's involvement in historical events, a soldier committed to the effectiveness of the Mamluk army, and an accomplished courtier loyal to the house of Qalāwūn.¹⁷⁸¹

As a pious commentator of contemporary events, Baybars al-Manṣūrī often concerned himself with the caliphate and the Abbasid family. He even composed a history of caliphs and rulers, *al-Laṭā'if fī akhbār al-khalā'if*, which has not survived.¹⁷⁸² Nevertheless, in his other narratives the author alludes to prophetic traditions extolling the descendants of al-ʿAbbās and their enduring political importance.¹⁷⁸³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī seldom fails to mention the caliphate without offering a short prayer of thanks for its restoration or for the well-being of the current caliph, his father, and their virtuous ancestors.¹⁷⁸⁴ After all, the contemporary Abbasid in Cairo was a fulfillment of widely agreed-upon promises and prophecies made by Muḥammad that the line would remain in the hands of his uncle al-ʿAbbās forever, making this caliphate a matter of supreme religious importance. The caliph was imperative not only for his ability to serve as a living conduit to the family of the Prophet, but also to the idyllic period of the latter's companions.¹⁷⁸⁵

As a historian, Baybars al-Manṣūrī is valued for his vantage point as a senior mamlūk who occupied the lofty rank of amir of one hundred and commander of one thousand.¹⁷⁸⁶ Like most classical Muslim historians, his historical writing understands the outcome of battles as the result of God's intervention.¹⁷⁸⁷ The caliph occasionally accompanied the army during Mamluk military campaigns, and the author depicts him as a living representation of the prophetic

¹⁷⁸⁰ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 78. Like Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, Baybars al-Manṣūrī fails to mention that nearly a year passed between the investitures in Cairo.

¹⁷⁸¹ It is perhaps for this reason that Rabbat described Baybars al-Manṣūrī as “the closest representative we have of a Mamluk viewpoint.” See: *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 6.

¹⁷⁸² This work apparently comprised several volumes, some passages having survived in the work of al-ʿAynī. See: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, xx; Richards, “A Mamluk Amir's Mamluk History,” 38; Ashtor, “Baybars al-Manṣūrī.”

¹⁷⁸³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 60.

¹⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 82, 359-60, 372.

¹⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 80. In their reports of al-Ḥākim's investiture by Baybars with the garments of the *futuwwa* brotherhood, some Mamluk historians list the full chain of its members, while Baybars al-Manṣūrī is content to stress that the *futuwwa* linked the caliph and sultan to important companions ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Salmān al-Fārisī. On the caliph as a conduit to the Prophet's family, see Chapter 5 below.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Little, *Introduction*, 4; Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 30.

¹⁷⁸⁷ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 124-42.

legacy.¹⁷⁸⁸ The Commander of the Faithful, emulating his pious ancestors, rides at the sultan's side at the head of numerous soldiers "of whom even lions were wary." Later they are found meeting the enemy head-on in the company of hosts of angels (recalling Islamic accounts of the Battle of Badr) at an auspicious and divinely determined hour.¹⁷⁸⁹

For the author, the Abbasid caliph was a kind of pennant representing *dīn*, *dawla*, and God's favor for the "army of the Muslims." It is in this sense that Baybars al-Manṣūrī transforms the caliph into a talisman of piety embedded in the Mamluk army, his mere presence vouchsafing divine blessing and victory.¹⁷⁹⁰ Having the caliph in the sultan's civilian retinue among his army likewise added grace, legitimacy, and *sharīʿ* morality to the cause. In regard to *jihād*, there is never a hint here that the Abbasid caliph is a parasite, camp follower, or hanger-on. Rather, Baybars al-Manṣūrī emphasizes that the Mamluk military had been highly fortunate to have such a resource in their company, for the caliph ensured God's assistance, no matter who the sultan of the day was.¹⁷⁹¹

This image is consistent with an understanding that Baybars al-Manṣūrī, though he was a loyal servant of the sultan and his *dawla*, held a broader, more transcendent loyalty to the Mamluk regime and its army, as an institution fundamentally committed to Islam no matter who was in charge.¹⁷⁹² This may in part help to explain the author's unabashed commemoration of the legacy of the late sultan Baybars as restorer of the caliphate, even though he himself had been in the service of Qalāwūn and his sons. From the tone of his writing, Baybars al-Manṣūrī exudes loyalty to the reigning sultan, but more so to a general vision of the Mamluks as protectors of Islam and the caliphate as well as lawful prosecutors of holy war against Mongols and Franks.¹⁷⁹³

As a veteran of Mamluk conflicts going back to early wars against the Franks in 664/1266, Baybars al-Manṣūrī esteemed the Mamluk system and accepted the sultan Baybars as a figure whose governance was guided by Islamic piety.¹⁷⁹⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī wrote that the sultan's 661/1262 investiture of al-Ḥākim had been an "erection of the beacon of Islamic *sharīʿa*."¹⁷⁹⁵

¹⁷⁸⁸ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 372, 375.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 372.

¹⁷⁹⁰ In light of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's apparent interest in emphasizing the presence of the caliph as symbolic standard of *jihād*, his omission of the important part played by the caliph in the midst of al-Ashraf Khalīl's preparations for the assault on Qalʿat al-Rūm seems conspicuous.

¹⁷⁹¹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 372, 375.

¹⁷⁹² Ibid., 375.

¹⁷⁹³ For discussion of an identifiable "Mamluk *jihād*" see Albrecht Fuess, "Ottoman Ġazwah - Mamluk Ġihād. Two Arms on the Same Body?" in *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014), 271-5, 278-82.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Tuhfa*, 51.

Though the Mongols were nominally Muslim by 702/1302, their rival ideology refused to allow the acceptance of caliphal authority in Cairo.¹⁷⁹⁶ Baybars al-Manṣūrī mentions the caliph al-Mustakfī's participation in the campaign of the young al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, recollecting a pre-existing prayer of acknowledgment that the caliph is

cousin of our master the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, whom every Muslim is obliged to follow and in so doing, we are following the regulations of God and the Prophet in carrying out *jihād* [...] Whoever follows the obligations of God [follows] the obligations of the Commander of the Faithful, because God has protected him and made him our ruler and whoever refuses or is stubborn in submitting to him, will be humiliated by God.¹⁷⁹⁷

An observer of extraordinary events in his own time, Baybars al-Manṣūrī wrote of the 665/1266 re-establishment of Friday congregational prayers at the mosque of al-Azhar, one of the three important Cairene mosques from which orators declared the ruler's sovereignty from the *minbar* each Friday, after an extended absence due in part to restorations dating back to early Ayyubid times. The author declared that it had been God's wish to leave the mosque dormant until prayers could be restored specifically in the name of the Abbasid caliph of Cairo and the Mamluk sultan that had aided him.¹⁷⁹⁸

Equally trained in Islamic sciences and secretarial arts, the erudition of Baybars al-Manṣūrī strongly informs his historical writing. As a soldier, he was certain that military victory and the success of the state depended, to some extent, on the perpetuation of the Abbasid caliphate and its good treatment by the ruling elite. In his historical presentation, it seems clear that the author thought the Mamluks brought the caliph on campaigns to curry God's favor and secure success for the army. As it had for Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, the contemporary Abbasid caliphate played an important role in Baybars al-Manṣūrī's characterization of the Mamluk political and military infrastructure as a machine of good Islamic governance.

2. Abū al-Fidā' (d. 732/1331)

¹⁷⁹⁶ This does not seem implausible considering their ancestor Hülāgū had ended the dynasty in Baghdad. See: C. H. Becker, "Barthold's Studien über Kalif und Sultan," in *Der Islam* 4 (1916): 374-5; Reuven Amitai-Preiss: "The Fall and Rise of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 3 (1996): 488; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 42, 68-70. See also above, p. 58.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 359-60.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 107; idem, *Mukhtār al-akhbār: ta'rīkh al-dawla al-ayyūbiyya wa-dawlat al-mamālīk al-baḥriyya ḥattā sanat 702 H.*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Ḥamdān (Cairo, 1993), 34; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:360-1; Muḥammad al-Birzālī al-Ishbīlī, *al-Muqtafā 'alā Kitāb al-rawḍatayn*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2006), 1:152; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 156-60; al-'Aynī, *Iqd*, 2:6; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:251-2; idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 384. See also: 'Ammār Muḥammad Nahār, *al-'Aṣr al-muḥtarā 'alayhi, 'aṣr al-mamālīk al-baḥriyya dirāsa fikriyya* (Damascus: Dār al-Nahḍa, 2007), 285-7.

The work of Ismāʿīl Abū al-Fidāʾ, an Ayyubid prince and vassal of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, offers a different point of view. The abbreviated version of his universal chronicle, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī taʾrīkh al-baṣhar*, written about 718/1318-9, covers events in Cairo from his seat in Syria.¹⁷⁹⁹ The *Mukhtaṣar* shares similarities with the writing of Baybars al-Manṣūrī and scholars believe both authors worked from similar sources.¹⁸⁰⁰ Abū al-Fidāʾ was born about twelve years after the Cairo investitures and relies on other authors for information about them.

A longstanding collaborator in Mamluk military operations from as early as 684/1285, Abū al-Fidāʾ was well-placed to offer his unique take on affairs of the regime thanks to the resources of his high-born position.¹⁸⁰¹ His coverage of the Abbasid investitures lacks, to say the least, the panache of his recent predecessors and contemporaries who took great pains to affirm the lofty titulature of caliphal office. In a section of his narrative devoted to the first two caliphs of Cairo, he describes al-Mustanṣir as somebody (*shakhṣ*) who merely received the pledge of the caliphate and whose lineage was confirmed.¹⁸⁰² Indeed, Abū al-Fidāʾ seems almost cavalier in his report that “a group of bedouin approached Egypt and among them was a black-colored fellow called Aḥmad whom they claimed to be the son of the [Abbasid] *imām* al-Zāhir billāh.”¹⁸⁰³ He appears to be the first historian to style the dark-complexioned al-Mustanṣir as “the black caliph,” an epithet adopted by later historians.¹⁸⁰⁴ In addition, Abū al-Fidāʾ claims that the common people mocked the caliph with the mysterious moniker “al-Zarābīnī.”¹⁸⁰⁵

In his coverage of the later investiture of al-Ḥākim in Cairo, Abū al-Fidāʾ writes that Baybars invited this “person of Abbasid descent named Aḥmad” to appear at a general audience and named him caliph after confirming his claim. It is here that the author notes that by his own time, nearly half a century later, the dispute over the official Abbasid genealogy had

¹⁷⁹⁹ Ismāʿīl Abū al-Fidāʾ, *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abū al-Fidāʾ, Sultan of Ḥamāh (672-732/1273-1331)* Tr. P. M. Holt, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983), 8-10.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Little, *Introduction*, 43.

¹⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁸⁰² Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:253-4.

¹⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3:253. At the very least, the history of Abū al-Fidāʾ seems to harbor some doubt concerning the veracity of the caliph’s identity which did not elude later historians. See: Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Dhahab al-masbūk fī dhikr man ḥajja min al-khulafāʾ wa-al-mulūk*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2000), 89; Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ ʿAshūr, *al-Ayyūbiyyūn wa-al-Mamālīk fī Miṣr wa-al-Shām* (Cairo, 1993), 205-6.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Later authors like al-Dhahabī also referred to al-Mustanṣir as “the black” or “intensely brown” and suggested that he may have had an Abyssinian mother. See: al-Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, 48:407; *idem*, *Duwal al-Islām* (Hyderabad, 1364-5/1944-6), 2:125; ʿUmar ibn al-Wardī, *Taʾrīkh ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf, 1969), 2:303.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Abū al-Fidāʾ, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:253; Ibn al-Wardī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2:305; al-ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 1:294. It remains unclear which group of the populace referred to al-Mustanṣir as al-Zarābīnī, though according to al-Dhahabī and Ibn al-Wardī, the name may have been linked to his dark coloring. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 104; Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate,” 142, 152.

continued.¹⁸⁰⁶ He offers two alternate chains for al-Ḥākim, one disseminated widely amongst the people of Egypt and one spread by a mysterious group identified as *al-shurafā' al-'abbāsiyyūn al-salmāniyyūn* which may refer to survivors of Abbasid nobility descended from the companion of the Prophet, Salmān al-Fārisī.¹⁸⁰⁷ Both genealogies and their political implications have been explored by Ziyāda, Surūr, and most extensively by Heidemann.¹⁸⁰⁸ In short, the Egyptian genealogy cited the Abbasid caliph al-Rāshid (529-30/1135-6) as the caliph's most recent ancestor, which had little relevance other than linking al-Ḥākim to the Abbasid family. The Salmanic genealogy on the other hand connected the caliph to the father of al-Rāshid, al-Mustarshid, and also potentially placed al-Ḥākim in a group of Abbasid descendants important among Shiite and Sufi circles due to their connection to the Prophet's Iranian companion, who also received honors and recognition in *futuwwa* culture. The Salmanic genealogy closed part of the distance by placing about five generations between al-Ḥākim and al-Rāshid, whereas the Egyptian genealogy contained between seven and nine.¹⁸⁰⁹

While Abū al-Fidā' never went as far as to *reject* the genealogical claims of either al-Mustanşir or al-Ḥākim, he did imply that there were still questions in some circles, regarding their authenticity, at least in centers at a further radius from Cairo. It suggests likewise that a rival interpretation diverging from mainstream Mamluk historiography actually existed.

Abū al-Fidā' scarcely mentions al-Ḥākim until his death in 701/1302, when he again discusses the lineage dispute and the subsequent succession of al-Mustakfī.¹⁸¹⁰ The author's skepticism towards the early Cairo caliphate, combined with its eventual mothballing by Baybars and Qalāwūn, may have caused him to lose interest after the initial investiture of al-Ḥākim. Unlike Baybars al-Manşūrī, the surviving text of Abū al-Fidā' appears to make no mention of the caliph accompanying the Mamluk army into Syria to battle the Mongols. While Abū al-Fidā' may have had mildly negative or suspicious feelings toward the caliphate, there could be other reasons for his lack of coverage. Having been born in 673/1273, he had been quite young at the time of Baybars's caliphal investitures. Later, as a military man whose primary concern was recording the history of the environs outside Ḥamā, the caliphate in Cairo occupied less immediate

¹⁸⁰⁶ Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaşar*, 3:255-6. Although many accepted him as a true Abbasid, Mamluk historians never fully arrived at an agreement on the genealogy of al-Ḥākim. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 367-8; Annemarie Schimmel, "Some Glimpses of the Religious Life in Egypt during the Later Mamluk Period" *Islamic Studies* 4 (1965): 354.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaşar*, 3:255-6. See also: al-'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 1:346-7.

¹⁸⁰⁸ See: Muḥammad M. Ziyāda, "Ba'd mulāḥazāt jadīda fī ta'rīkh dawlat al-mamālīk bi-Miṣr," *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb* (1936): 80; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat al-Zāhir Baybars* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1960), 59-60; Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 72-5; 373-8.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 72-5.

¹⁸¹⁰ Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaşar*, 4:59.

interest.¹⁸¹¹ Although a well-liked hunting partner and boon companion of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Abū al-Fidā' remained a Syrian-based non-Mamluk, perhaps left uninformed of the political tensions surrounding the Abbasid caliphate in the early fourteenth century.

The unique position and background of Abū al-Fidā' raises possible questions about the sources of caliphal legitimacy. He was on unexpectedly good terms with earlier Mamluk sultans who considered him an ally despite his family connection to the Ayyubids, most of whom had failed to accept the Mamluk regime that ended their control.¹⁸¹²

C. *Awlād al-Nās* Historians

The sons of Turkish and Circassian Mamluk-trained officers or *awlād al-nās*, comprised a class officially barred from military service in the early Mamluk period, though many of them went on to occupy other positions in the administration, including the scholarly echelons and the bureaucratic apparatus.¹⁸¹³ Close ties to the regime granted special access to a world unseen by all but a minority of Arab historians. Many historical sources composed by the *awlād al-nās* tended to sympathize with the sultans and their courts. Like others, they wrote conventional chronicles, biographies, and handbooks, though not always with the same intense training as their contemporaries, which is evident in the colloquialisms, vernacular prose, and departure from literary Arabic often apparent in their work.¹⁸¹⁴ Many writers such as Ibn al-Dawādārī, Ibn Ṣaṣra, and Ibn Iyās invented dialogues, added gossip, and fomented a literary quality in their historiography. It seems likely that the *awlād al-nās* saw themselves as the “middlemen” linking the Mamluk military elite of the citadel to the Arabophone scholarly religious establishment.¹⁸¹⁵

¹⁸¹¹ Little also accuses Abū al-Fidā' of a “lack of interest in ecclesiastical affairs” based on the author’s scant coverage of Ibn Taymiyya’s trial. See: *Introduction*, 45.

¹⁸¹² The Ayyubids of Ḥamā and their predecessors had been on good terms with the early Mamluks and earlier regimes. See: Konrad Hirschler, “The Formation of the Civilian Elite in the Syrian Province: The Case of Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Ḥamāh,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 95-132.

¹⁸¹³ Ulrich Haarmann has dealt extensively with the *awlād al-nās* class, their literary output, and place in Mamluk society, see: “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33, no. 1 (1988): 103-14; idem, “The Sons of Mamluks as Fief-holders in Late Medieval Egypt,” in *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East*, ed. Tarif Khalidi (Beirut: American University in Beirut, 1984), 141-68; idem, “Väter und Söhne im Herrschaftssystem der Mamluken,” *Berliner Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft e.V. – Jahrbuch* (1995): 211-27; idem, “Joseph’s Law – The Careers and Activities of Mamluk Descendants before the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 174-87.

¹⁸¹⁴ Little, “Historiography,” 425. See also: Ulrich Haarmann, “Auflösung und Bewahrung der klassischen Formen arabischer Geschichtsschreibung in der Zeit der Mamluken,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 121 (1971): 46-60; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 188; Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 100.

¹⁸¹⁵ Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 116-7; Haarmann, “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage,” 104-5.

1. Al-Şafadī (d. 763/1363)

As the privileged son of a Mamluk amir, Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Şafadī easily secured access to careers in government and the arts. After studying with the likes of al-Dhahabī and Ibn Taymiyya in Syria, al-Şafadī traveled to Cairo and wrote on linguistics and literature, though he is best known for his comprehensive biographical dictionaries.¹⁸¹⁶ Several biographies of the contemporary caliphs provide exceptional coverage. His observations, thanks in part to earlier historians like al-Dhahabī, often include detailed information on the financial standing of the Abbasid caliphs and offer a candid view of disquiet among the subject populations whenever the sultans attempted to disrupt harmony in the caliphate.¹⁸¹⁷

In addition to his meticulous chronology, the true value of al-Şafadī's approach to biography is his variety of interests. He did not limit his entries to particular classes or professions; instead, al-Şafadī covers a wide assortment of notables and professionals. Caliphal military involvements, stipends, living conditions, and scholarly prowess are among his interests, allowing the author to compose a vivid portrait of several Cairo caliphs.¹⁸¹⁸

Coverage of the caliph al-Ḥākim and his son al-Mustakfī billāh includes important details left unmentioned by many earlier as well as contemporary sources.¹⁸¹⁹ For example, al-Şafadī's entry in the *A'yān*, taking its information from al-Dhahabī, enumerates al-Ḥākim's military victories and prowess in military leadership.¹⁸²⁰ Later, he notes that al-Mustakfī accompanied al-Nāṣir Muḥammad into battle against the Mongols at Shaḡhab.¹⁸²¹ With regard to financial standing the author claims that al-Ḥākim received a salary from Baybars sufficient to maintain himself without extravagance,¹⁸²² but offers more detail for al-Mustakfī, who received approximately 100,000 *dirhams* per year, a sum that steadily decreased after the caliph antagonized al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹⁸²³ While al-Ḥākim spent years of confinement in the tower of the citadel,¹⁸²⁴ his son al-Mustakfī alternated residences near the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa and on

¹⁸¹⁶ On the life and works of al-Şafadī, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 5:241-57.

¹⁸¹⁷ The most salient examples of these interests come in al-Şafadī's two biographies of the caliph al-Mustakfī. See: *A'yān al-ʿaṣr wa-a'wān al-naṣr* (Beirut, 1998), 2:419-21; idem, *Wāḡfī*, 15:349-50.

¹⁸¹⁸ Although his *Wāḡfī* biography of the caliph al-Mustanṣir is largely based on earlier accounts by Abū Shāma, Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, and al-Yūnīnī, al-Şafadī conveys the general acceptance of the caliph's claim of descent from the Abbasid line transmitted through Mamluk sources. See: *Wāḡfī*, 7:384-5.

¹⁸¹⁹ One exception however, is al-Dhahabī, whose *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* and *Duwal al-Islām* appear to be important sources for al-Şafadī.

¹⁸²⁰ Al-Şafadī, *A'yān*, 1:208. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 21-4.

¹⁸²¹ Al-Şafadī, *A'yān*, 2:420; idem, *Wāḡfī*, 15:349.

¹⁸²² Al-Şafadī, *A'yān*, 1:209-10; idem, *Wāḡfī*, 6:317.

¹⁸²³ Al-Şafadī, *A'yān*, 2:421; idem, *Wāḡfī*, 15:350.

¹⁸²⁴ Al-Şafadī, *A'yān*, 1:209-10.

the Nile near Elephant Island (*Jazīrat al-Fīl*).¹⁸²⁵ Al-Ṣafadī also lists all the teachers that Mamluk authorities assigned to al-Ḥākim, including those active in the Islamic sciences.¹⁸²⁶ Al-Mustakfī, although he may not have been made to study as much as his father, attended scholarly salons and held court with the religious class.

The most detailed observations concern al-Mustakfī, the caliph for much of al-Ṣafadī's own lifetime. Candid glimpses of the caliph include the battle finery he wore beside the Mamluk sultan. One can also find a poetic description of the caliph's 737/1337 deportation to Qūṣ in al-Ṣafadī's commentary on the mourning throngs that tearfully witnessed the departure of the Commander of the Faithful into exile.¹⁸²⁷ Concerning the events that followed, the author offered subtle criticism of Mamluk misdealings with the caliphs by contrasting al-Ḥākim II's open *bay'a* with the hurried and secretive pledge ceremony for al-Wāthiq billāh.¹⁸²⁸ By comparison, al-Ṣafadī's entries on the two sons of al-Mustakfī, al-Ḥākim II and al-Mu'taḍid, merely recount their genealogies and enumerate their years in office.¹⁸²⁹

Such details provide a sketch of the caliphs in the mid-fourteenth century as they were seen by members of court. They were easily accessible to some visitors, usually courtiers, bureaucrats, '*ulamā*', and litterateurs, while the sultans remained cautious about their receiving amirs or members of the military class. Writing during a period in which the nostalgic reigns of Quṭuz, Baybars, and Qalāwūn were widely regarded as a "golden age," al-Ṣafadī was at ease discussing potentially controversial information such as the pre-Cairo histories of the first two Abbasid caliphs. The account of the caliph al-Mustakfī provides an excellent description of the author's own casual interactions with the caliph. Also displayed are various sides of the caliph's life, including military involvements, personal finances and household, as well as clues about the caliph's reception among the masses.

2. Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470): The Conscientious Courtier

Access to a diverse grouping of scholarly mentors and sultans, as well as his own forays into Mamluk military culture, furnished Ibn Taghrībirdī, an Egyptian-based historian, commander, and courtier, with a vista covering numerous strata of society, including the

¹⁸²⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 15:350. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:416; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:590-3.

¹⁸²⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 1:210; idem, *Wāfi*, 6:318.

¹⁸²⁷ Al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān*, 2:420-1.

¹⁸²⁸ Ibid., 1:220. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 6:21-2.

¹⁸²⁹ On al-Ḥākim II, see: *Wāfi*, 30:103-4; idem, *A'yān*, 1:220-1. For al-Mu'taḍid, see: *Wāfi*, 10:235, 30:148-9 (the latter biography of al-Mu'taḍid does provide some minor details of his life).

household of at least one Abbasid caliph.¹⁸³⁰ In chronicling the Mamluk period, Ibn Taghrībirdī valued the heritage of the High Caliphate, and although aware of the limitations of the office in his own time, he acknowledged its primacy as the highest position in Islam.¹⁸³¹ He also occasionally presents the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates as paragons of virtuous leadership that the Mamluk sultans as their practical successors, should emulate.¹⁸³²

Throughout his history, Ibn Taghrībirdī alludes to stories of great men of the Islamic golden age, including Hārūn al-Rashīd, often using them to take the measure of contemporary Mamluk sultans. It is clear that for Ibn Taghrībirdī the Mamluk sultans he served, particularly Jaqmaq and Qāyṭbāy, are the true heirs of the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs, comparable to them in power and position in the Islamic world.¹⁸³³

Like most historians, Ibn Taghrībirdī celebrated the continuity of the Abbasid caliphate between Baghdad and Egypt, in which it gained the support and protection of the Mamluks and their army, with the first Cairo caliph al-Mustansir picking up where al-Mustaʿsim of Baghdad had left off. Thus, he wrote, the Islamic world had been without a caliph for only a brief

¹⁸³⁰ As a boy, Ibn Taghrībirdī had been a frequent visitor to the household of the caliph al-Muʿtaḍid II whose wife had previously been a concubine in the household of his father. His father having coupled legally with the woman, Ibn Taghrībirdī considered her inviolate (*maḥram*) by Islamic law and thereby treated her as though she were a mother, aunt, or wet nurse. Among other things, he could visit her freely at the caliph's house without raising suspicion or requiring her to veil. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:305; idem, *Hawādith*, 137-8.

¹⁸³¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī acknowledges it as such in the context of a discussion of the wazirate's devolution by the Mamluk period. See: *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963-72), 16:85. See also: William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382-1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes*, part 1 (Berkeley, 1955), 96; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Craftsmen, Upstarts and Sufis in the Late Mamluk Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 74, no. 3 (2011): 378-9. On the decline of the wazir position in favor of the *kātib al-sirr* in the Mamluk administration, see: Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 205-6.

¹⁸³² Remarks by Ibn Taghrībirdī suggest his understanding that the "powers that be" represented a caliphate of sorts. In his mention of amirs quibbling over stipends paid out at a low rate of silver as Mamluk forces mobilized to take part in Barsbāy's expedition to Āmid, Ibn Taghrībirdī quotes the maxim "no hand extends longer than the hand of the caliphate." See: *Nujūm*, 14:369. Additionally, at least one researcher has observed that the *Nujūm* sought to deliver morals to its readers as a form of advice literature. See: Robert Irwin, "Factions in Medieval Egypt," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1986): 237.

¹⁸³³ Later overwhelmed by his disgust at the gory execution of al-Nāṣir Faraj, whose mutilated body was discarded atop a dung heap, Ibn Taghrībirdī evokes the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī who despite his well-known hatred for the Umayyads, scolded a man who spoke ill of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd. As a leader, Ibn Taghrībirdī presents al-Mahdī in the anecdote as one who jealously guarded and preserved the sanctity of the caliphal office and protected others from dishonoring its name even if their assessment of past rulers was correct. Ibn Taghrībirdī observed that God entrusted Faraj with leadership, and that by his brutal murder (which had involved the complicity of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿīn) the sacred trust of leadership, and the sultanate as its latest practical incarnation, had been violated. See: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:149. On the execution, see: Daniel Beaumont, "Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 223-4.

period.¹⁸³⁴ In addition, notwithstanding the practical preeminence of Mamluk sultans, Ibn Taghrībirdī occasionally suggested that even the contemporary Abbasid caliphs were still worthy models: he drew attention, for example, to the piously abstemious (although apparently impoverished) living of the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II, juxtaposed against the opulence of the sultans.¹⁸³⁵

Despite his awareness of the preeminence of Mamluk sultans, Ibn Taghrībirdī also spoke frankly of the predicament of the Commanders of the Faithful in the fourteenth century. In his biography of the caliph al-Ḥākim II, the historian remarked upon the way “[al-Ḥākim] approached the caliphate in the manner of these caliphs of our time, nothing remaining to him from the caliphate save for its title.”¹⁸³⁶

Loyalty and Caliphate at Court

Ibn Taghrībirdī may also have understood the essence of the Mamluk sultanate to have been a “caliphate” in the classical sense as Cairo became the *de facto* center of Sunni Islam after the fall of Baghdad. Any further discussion of Ibn Taghrībirdī’s vision of the Mamluk regime requires an understanding that the historian, despite years of formal Islamic training, was first and foremost the product of a Turkish and Mamluk culture. His *awlād al-nās* origins may have made partiality towards the Mamluk elite somewhat natural. His father’s circle understood a universal though unspoken loyalty to the Abbasid house as a secondary part of the Mamluk ethos, but individual amirs could often do little to shield the caliph from the animus of the sultan. Similarly, the narrative of Ibn Taghrībirdī readily turned on individual caliphs the moment they overstepped the expectations of the regime.¹⁸³⁷

If Ibn Taghrībirdī understood the sultans as successors to the Baghdad caliphs, what role was left for the caliphs of his own time? He accepted the caliph’s position in the Mamluk system, which he credited with reviving the caliphate before absorbing and superseding its classical functions.

The journey of the caliph al-Wāthiq to the family office proved a touchy subject for some later chroniclers. Ibn Taghrībirdī was aware of the controversy surrounding al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s interference with the caliphal succession after the death of the caliph al-Mustakfi in

¹⁸³⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109-10.

¹⁸³⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:305. Ibn Taghrībirdī remarks that the caliph’s family lived in far worse condition in Cairo than many lowly Copt families.

¹⁸³⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 1:308.

¹⁸³⁷ Stephen Humphreys linked Ibn Taghrībirdī’s positive judgment of the Mamluk regime to Ibn Jamā’a’s argument that rulers seized power by force, after which judgment on their conduct was to be reserved. See: *Islamic History*, 140.

740/1340 and mentions in his history of caliphs and kings, the *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, that historians differ over al-Wāthiq's caliphate because it had been established by the sultan rather than by caliphal *'ahd* from a predecessor. Unlike al-'Umarī and al-Suyūfī who did not hide their disdain for the sultan's action and the subsequent behavior of al-Wāthiq, for Ibn Taghrībirdī, it was for the individual observer, upon learning the details of the matter, to determine whether "to affirm [al-Wāthiq as a legitimate holder of office] or reject him if one so desires."¹⁸³⁸

Ibn Taghrībirdī's account of the alleged 785/1383 plot by the caliph al-Mutawakkil and two amirs to depose and murder Barqūq presents the case against the caliph without comment, implying that the issue of the caliph's guilt or innocence was controversial in official Mamluk circles.¹⁸³⁹ Three decades later, Ibn Taghrībirdī used the contentious deposition of the caliph al-Musta'īn from the sultanate in 815/1412 as an occasion to weigh in on the legitimacy of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh. For the historian, it was clear that al-Musta'īn was never intended to exercise the sultanate for long, and was merely a compromise appointee agreed upon by the amirs of Egypt and Syria only to prevent discord in the interim.¹⁸⁴⁰ Some Islamic legalists, on the other hand, found it difficult to accept that al-Musta'īn's deposition had been legal. According to *sharī'a* norms, removing a caliph from power required proof that he had deviated from Islam or no longer met the qualifications for the caliphate. Until then, the selected caliph could remain in office indefinitely, provided he fulfilled his contract. Commentators such as al-Maqrīzī doubly accused Shaykh of unlawfully deposing the caliph without religious proof and worse still, creating a vacancy in the caliphate.¹⁸⁴¹ Rising to defend Shaykh against "wicked fabrications,"¹⁸⁴² Ibn Taghrībirdī gave a rebuttal that the sultan had been preoccupied with battling his rival Nawrūz and therefore delayed the issue of settling the caliphate until after the threat had abated. Regarding the ouster of the caliph, Ibn Taghrībirdī appealed to the presence of other religious authorities at court:

Al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh discussed the situation before the qadis, eminent amirs and others on the given day, and what greater proof is there than that? As for the vacancy in the caliphate, it was brief; indeed, deposition and appointment can be accomplished within a single hour!¹⁸⁴³

¹⁸³⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo, 1997), 1:244.

¹⁸³⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:234-5.

¹⁸⁴⁰ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:61.

¹⁸⁴¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:303. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:273-4.

¹⁸⁴² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:303.

¹⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4:304.

Elsewhere, Ibn Taghribirdī echoes the alleged view of the sultan Shaykh that discord and bloodshed among Muslims would have been the outcome of a dysfunctional sultanate under al-Musta‘īn. As consolation, the historian restates al-Maqrīzī’s observation that al-Musta‘īn had been suited for the caliphal office, but fates were simply not on his side.¹⁸⁴⁴

Thus an unwritten rule became manifest: a caliph reaches for the powers of the sultanate at his dire peril. Nevertheless, Ibn Taghribirdī recognized that it was still very much to the advantage of the sultans to give the Commander of the Faithful his due, just as he reported that al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar’s later reconciliation with al-Musta‘īn endeared the former to the ruling class of Cairo.¹⁸⁴⁵ The significance and influence of the Abbasid caliphs within Mamluk society *as a whole* could not be easily erased: elsewhere, the writer thought it important enough to say that the sultan Jaqmaq had had the unique honor of receiving investiture by three Abbasid caliphs.¹⁸⁴⁶

But forty years later, the author was appalled by the political opportunism of the caliph al-Qā’im bi-amr Allāh. At that time, Ibn Taghribirdī’s narrative scolds the caliph for disruption and fomenting rebellion after suffering the indignity of being seated unceremoniously on the floor by the son of Jaqmaq, al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān.¹⁸⁴⁷ Once again, the historian defended the regime by conceding “[Jaqmaq] did as such with [al-Qā’im’s predecessor] al-Mu‘taḍid billāh on the day [the sultan’s] investiture document was read. Perhaps it was a custom of the bygone kings [...] for al-Zāhir Jaqmaq always treated the ‘*ulamā*’ and doctors of the law respectfully [by seating them at his feet], so why not the caliphs[?]”¹⁸⁴⁸

After al-Qā’im’s attempt to aid the 859/1455 coup against Īnāl (the sultan he had helped invest after al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān was deposed), Ibn Taghribirdī portrays the caliph as a traitor who failed to do his part in supporting the incumbent (and thereby rightful) Mamluk sultan. Ibn Taghribirdī chastised what he interpreted as al-Qā’im’s shallow opportunism:

The caliph was frivolous and foolish and thus inclined towards [the mutineers], thinking that if he was with [them], one of their number might triumph as sultan, and his own position would be strengthened, becoming even more important than before [...] When this *fitna* occurred he thought he might make common cause with its promoters and if one of them became sultan he would raise his position above that

¹⁸⁴⁴ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Manhal*, 7:64. See also: Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīda fī tarājīm al-a’yān al-muḥīda*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), 2:215.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:205-6.

¹⁸⁴⁶ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:455, 459; idem, *Ḥawāḍith*, 349.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:35.

¹⁸⁴⁸ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Ḥawāḍith al-duḥūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper as “Extracts from Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī’s Chronicle Entitled Ḥawāḍith ad-duḥūr fī madā ‘l-ayyām wash-shuhūr,” *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930-42), 184.

which Īnāl had done and complete control would come into his hands, heedless that the voice of the ages would speak thusly to him:

The best of ways is the middle path,
Love of the extreme is faulty.

Birds seldom take flight and soar so high--
without tumbling as they fly.¹⁸⁴⁹

Rather than execute the caliph, Īnāl exiled him to Alexandria, presenting Ibn Taghrībirdī with the occasion to praise the sultan for having done no harm during his reign save for banishing the caliph for his part in the rebellion, adding that “[Īnāl] is to be excused for that, and if it had been any other of the leading kings he would have done many times [worse than] that [to the caliph].”¹⁸⁵⁰ In this statement, the historian again makes a case for the regime in the controversy attached to the exile of a caliph, a deeply divisive act for any sultan.

Image of the Caliphate

Ibn Taghrībirdī’s diligence in reporting the Abbasid presence at state functions, although by no means unique, suggests a keen awareness of the caliph’s political capital and a need to demonstrate that the Mamluk system venerated the caliph by resorting to him as vital officiator. If his historical writing was indeed intended for other courtiers, consistent mention of the caliph at official occasions may have been an attempt to protect the regime from critics.¹⁸⁵¹

As a pragmatist in touch with the realities of courtly life, Ibn Taghrībirdī understood the caliphs as rulers whose powers were severely restricted by the state and subject to its whim. His view of the caliphate carried the notion that individual caliphs were replaceable should the need arise, but he was attuned to the ‘*ulamā*’s historical reverence for the caliphate, which certainly mattered considering their collective approval legitimized Mamluk rule. Nevertheless, veneration of the Abbasid caliph could never come at the expense of a Mamluk sultan’s reputation, and this remained a central tenet in the author’s historical outlook.

Without a hint of skepticism, Ibn Taghrībirdī describes the practice of most Circassian sultans who at the end of their lives made ineffective attempts to establish their dynasties by bequeathing their powers to their sons under the auspices of helpless caliphs. It was peculiar that the sultans persevered in the custom despite the realities of historical precedent; few of them

¹⁸⁴⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:89-90.

¹⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16:158.

¹⁸⁵¹ Little, “Historiography,” 208; Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 65.

seemed to remember that they too had sidestepped a predecessor's son on the way to power, a son whose birthright had been "guaranteed" by the same caliph whom they now approached.¹⁸⁵²

Frequently inconsistent, Ibn Taghrībirdī presents himself as a pious Muslim sensitive to Islamic social mores, though one who tacitly approved flagrant Mamluk infractions of the *sharī'a*.¹⁸⁵³ As a high-placed Turkish scholar and historian, he certainly had his share of jealous rivals among Arab classical religious scholars such as the traditionist Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī.¹⁸⁵⁴ Despite criticisms for failing to abandon his Turkish connections, Ibn Taghrībirdī maintained many of the cultural values of his non-Turkish colleagues. Any affinity Ibn Taghrībirdī felt for the contemporary caliphate seems more influenced by its use in traditional Mamluk ceremonial than by personal religious upbringing or his access to the household of al-Mu'taḍid II. It was the Mamluk sultanate of his day that he saw as rightful successor to the historical caliphate, the legacy of which the Mamluks were obliged to uphold. Although he occasionally charged members of the Mamluk regime with corruption, his sympathies seem planted firmly in the camp of the ruling elite, thereby coloring his presentation of the Abbasid caliphs. His moral pronouncements on individual caliphs were frequently made in the service of defending and representing the rulers he served.¹⁸⁵⁵

Nevertheless, as historian, his total presentation supports the notion that the caliphs held a power that demanded respect and wariness among the ruling class.¹⁸⁵⁶ For Ibn Taghrībirdī, the caliphate was part of the state apparatus and represented the guiding light of Islam entrusted to Mamluk protection. It is perhaps through Ibn Taghrībirdī, as a keen observer of Mamluk society, that we achieve, along with Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, a near image of how Mamluk rulers might have

¹⁸⁵² Recent scholarship has suggested, however, that the Mamluks sultans were sincere in what has been described as a "dynastic impulse" to establish their sons in power after them. See: Anne F. Broadbridge, "Sending Home for Mom and Dad: The Extended Family Impulse in Mamluk Politics," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 1-2. See also: Holt, "Position and Power," 239-41.

¹⁸⁵³ Jonathan P. Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims: The Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 166.

¹⁸⁵⁴ For modern and pre-modern critiques of Ibn Taghrībirdī as a historian, see: Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'* (Cairo, 1934-6), 10:305-8 and William Popper, "Sakhāwī's criticism of Ibn Taghrībirdī," in *Studi orientistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* (Rome, 1956), 2:371-89. On the possible bias of Arab '*ulamā'*' towards Mamluk-descended Turkophone scholars, see: Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage," 82-5.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Ibn Taghrībirdī had harsh words for sultans such as Īnāl who lacked basic Arabic language skills and knowledge of Islamic tenets. See: Haarmann, "Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage," 112-3. It is noteworthy that Ibn Taghrībirdī, although he only lived for a few years into the reign of the sultan, had few kind words for Qāyṭbāy, who most other Mamluk chroniclers tended to regard with favor. For the chronicler's brief coverage of Qāyṭbāy, see: *Nujūm*, 16:394-6. See also: Donald P. Little, "The Governance of Jerusalem under Qāyṭbāy," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 143.

¹⁸⁵⁶ This is evidently the case in Barqūq's desperate attempts to make amends with al-Mutawakkil in 791/1389 amidst an inhospitable political climate complicated by the revolt of his Syrian amirs.

understood the caliphs confined in their capital and the role they played in their court culture and ethos.¹⁸⁵⁷

3. Ibn Iyās (d. 930/1524)

Born, like Ibn Taghrībirdī, into a Mamluk family, Muḥammad ibn Iyās held an *iqṭāʿ* that afforded him enough financial freedom to compose historical works.¹⁸⁵⁸ Although descended from the Mamluk class, his family had lost much of the influence it had once enjoyed at court, losing its place among the elite amirs.¹⁸⁵⁹ As a compiler of history, however, Ibn Iyās counted several Mamluk officers among his informants.¹⁸⁶⁰

A condensed universal history and important local history of Cairo during the years of the author's life, the *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr* is largely based on eye-witness reports. Modern studies of the work have criticized its organization and mistaken chronologies amid speculation that Ibn Iyās was not the true author of some sections.¹⁸⁶¹

The historiography of Ibn Iyās coincides with two important political phenomena: the changeover from Mamluk to Ottoman rule in Egypt and Syria and a general decline in Islamic historiography written in Arabic.¹⁸⁶² As a historian of the contemporary Abbasid caliphate Ibn Iyās has no peer. Modern scholars characterize him as “deeply identified with the people of Cairo and the fallen regime”¹⁸⁶³ and as “a mouthpiece of the medium strata of society.”¹⁸⁶⁴ Although the earlier section of his history may be heavily indebted to the *akhbār* of al-Maqrīzī's *Sulūk*,¹⁸⁶⁵ the author of the *Badāʾiʿ*, by virtue of his survival to 930/1524, was able to cover the entire span, including the dramatic *finalé* of the Mamluk sultanate. He was in a unique position to evaluate the legacy of Mamluk policies, including the Abbasid caliphate, which remained a prevailing concern to him. As a source for the final six Abbasid caliphs of Cairo, Ibn Iyās is without equal.

¹⁸⁵⁷ The somewhat abstract notions of Mamluk identity and “loyalty” to the sultan and his “state” have been noted and discussed by Reuven Amitai. See: “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 36.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Little, *Introduction*, 92; Massoud, *Chronicles*, 69.

¹⁸⁵⁹ William M. Brinner, “Ibn Iyās,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 3:812.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Little, *Introduction*, 92.

¹⁸⁶¹ This is due largely to his earlier brief and vernacular style but for the years after 922/1516, the narrative becomes highly detailed and polished in style. See: Little, *Introduction*, 93; Brinner, “Ibn Iyās”; Irwin, “Mamluk History and Historians,” 169.

¹⁸⁶² Massoud, *Chronicles*, 69-70.

¹⁸⁶³ Michael Winter, “The Ottoman Occupation,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 490-1.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Axel Havemann, “The Chronicle of Ibn Iyās as a Source for Social and Cultural History from Below,” in *Towards a Cultural History of the Mamluk Era*, ed. Mahmoud Haddad, et al. (Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, Beirut, 2010), 88.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Massoud, *Chronicles*, 70.

The Badā'i' and the Caliphate

It is difficult to say with any certainty that his one-time teacher, the Egyptian scholar al-Suyūṭī, impressed upon Ibn Iyās his great concern and sympathy for the Abbasid caliphate.¹⁸⁶⁶ While the student does not express reverence for Islam's paramount office in the concrete terms of his former teacher, the *Badā'i'* is full of eyewitness reports from the years 870-928/1467-1522 that include lengthy asides on the affairs of the caliphate and a marked respect for the men who held that office.¹⁸⁶⁷

For the two centuries prior to his own lifetime, Ibn Iyās consistently recapitulates caliphal issues mentioned by earlier Mamluk sources. For the author, the Abbasid caliphate remains a vital concern throughout the Mamluk period, a viewpoint that may have been widely held among his class as well as the everyday Cairenes on behalf of whom he was thought to be writing, if indeed he was the author who "represents the public opinion of Cairo."¹⁸⁶⁸

Presentation of the Cairo Caliphs

Although it frequently interjects anecdotes about the caliphs in Mamluk history, as a historical source on the contemporary Abbasid caliphate, the latter day vantage point of the *Badā'i'* offers little retrospective consideration of the institution. The author informs us of precedents and some evolution in caliphal practices by the Mamluk era, such as the practice established under Barsbāy that made the sultans responsible for granting funding for a caliph's campaign expenses to Syria and beyond.¹⁸⁶⁹

Like most Mamluk chroniclers, Ibn Iyās often notes the caliph's presence at official events, particularly in matters of legitimating sultans, occasionally augmenting earlier reports with additional anecdotes or rumors. Regarding the caliphs' monthly visits in the company of the qadis to congratulate the sultans, Ibn Iyās first mentions the practice in the reign of al-Mustanjid (859-84/1455-79) and for the remainder of his history, mentions whether the meeting occurred at the start of each new month.¹⁸⁷⁰

¹⁸⁶⁶ Al-Suyūṭī's interest in the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo is discussed below. I have also discussed the interest of both authors in the contemporary Abbasid caliphate in my paper, "Casting the Caliph in a Cosmic Role: Examining al-Suyūṭī's Historical Vision," presented at the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies, in Venice, Italy on 23 June 2014.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Nevertheless, some modern historians have accused Ibn Iyās of falsifying and grossly embellishing reports of the caliph's relevance in post-Mamluk Cairo. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 396, 399; Faruk Sümer, "Yavuz Selim s'est-il proclamé calife?" *Turcica* 21-23 (1991): 351.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Winter, "Ottoman Occupation," 494.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 5:30, 33.

¹⁸⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:85.

Regarding the nature of the data, the *Badā'i'* includes a great deal of inter-familial politics, gossip, and comment on the complex relationships between competing branches of the Abbasid family. In matters of succession for both the caliphs al-Mutawakkil II in 884/1479 followed by al-Mustamsik in 903/1497 (and again in 914/1508), Ibn Iyās presents the schemes of rival Abbasid cousins as a subplot to the succession, demonstrating its interest for contemporary Cairenes.¹⁸⁷¹ He likewise devotes space to notable female members of the Abbasid family and reports minor changes in custom such as the way caliphs wore turbans or received gifts including properties and extravagant robes. So important to the author was the status of the caliph, that he even recounts details of the caliph's belongings, finery, and luggage as they traveled separately on campaign, and later recounts the unpleasant conditions of the caliph's passage to Istanbul in the spring of 923/1517.¹⁸⁷²

Voice of the People: Popular Images of Abbasid Authority in the Badā'i'

Ibn Iyās makes use of Egyptian vernacular in his writing and his overall presentation suggests the concerns of a man with an ear tuned to the streets. If Ibn Taghrībirdī had been a courtier who wrote history for other courtiers, Ibn Iyās was aware of the discussions of the *‘amma* and seems to have committed a great deal of common knowledge and street gossip to his chronicle. The author received information on the Abbasid caliphate from two important groups: the citadel elite and everyday Cairenes.¹⁸⁷³ Ibn Iyās remained conscious of the “public persona” of the caliphs and how sectors of Mamluk society responded to the Abbasid family.

In instances involving perceived victimization of individual caliphs at the hands of the Mamluk administration, Ibn Iyās alludes to outrage among a population that he unfortunately does not define well. With his non-specific use of the Arabic word *al-nās*, he frequently complicates matters by not distinguishing the attitudes of the citadel elite (also referred to as “*al-nās*”) from the collective mood of the masses in his writing.¹⁸⁷⁴ In regard to the sultan Qāyṭbāy's relieving the caliph al-Mustanjid of family properties, Ibn Iyās wrote that the citadel elite (*al-nās*) “regarded [the sultan's policies] as nasty actions” and also counted them among the sultan's bad deeds in his introduction to the reign of Qāyṭbāy.¹⁸⁷⁵ According to the historian, Mamluk insiders

¹⁸⁷¹ Ibid., 3:151, 378-9, 4:139-41.

¹⁸⁷² Ibid., 5:37, 352.

¹⁸⁷³ On rumors as a source of information used by the elites in Mamluk society, see Torsten Wollina, “News and Rumor - Local Sources of Knowledge about the World” in *Everything is on the Move: The Mamluk Empire as a Node in (Trans-)Regional Networks*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V & R Unipress, 2014), 289-307.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 1:2:205.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., 3:13. “*dhālika min masāwi'hi*.”

were likewise scandalized by al-Manṣūr ‘Uthmān’s coarse treatment of the caliph al-Qā’im and quietly prayed for his downfall;¹⁸⁷⁶ a statement in stark contrast to Ibn Taghrībirdī’s justification for the caliph being denied the honors of his high office based on Mamluk precedent. Ibn Taghrībirdī was likewise more candid about the restriction of the caliphs to the citadel beginning with the reign of al-Mustanjid, whereas Ibn Iyās decried it as bald-faced injustice.¹⁸⁷⁷ The author of the *Badā’i’* also notes that the relationship between al-Mutawakkil II and the public (*al-nās*) was marked by copious intimacy (*kathīrat al-‘ishra*).¹⁸⁷⁸ For the reigns of the last caliphs that he witnessed himself, Ibn Iyās admits to gathering information from rumor, “that which was widely spread among the populace” (*fa-alladhī istifāda bayna al-nās*), and hearsay from Syria about the caliph in Ottoman custody,¹⁸⁷⁹ noting that “talk on the matter [concerning the caliph] was abundant” (*al-aqwāl fī dhālik kathīra*).¹⁸⁸⁰ When the Ottoman sultan decided to expel the last caliph from Cairo, Ibn Iyās wrote that “the population bitterly regretted the departure of the Commander of the Faithful from Egypt: “The Caliphate has left Egypt to settle in Istanbul,” they said. These were gloomy circumstances.”¹⁸⁸¹

Subsequent information included in the *Badā’i’* concerning that caliph’s detention in Istanbul likewise derives from gossip circulating among the population during the visit of an Ottoman ambassador in late 925/1519 as well as letters the caliph wrote to his father.¹⁸⁸²

A secondary image of the author’s interest in the caliphate is punctuated by popular poetry preserved throughout the *Badā’i’*.¹⁸⁸³ Through previously existing verse or new lines inspired by current events, Ibn Iyās showcases contemporary perceptions of the Cairo caliphs. Poets often wrote verses containing witticisms that emphasized caliphal honor or lamentations in the wake of a caliph’s death or exile. It is through his reports interspersed with verse that Ibn Iyās, himself perhaps more of a belletrist than a historian, reflects the thoughts of the literary and educated classes regarding the Abbasid caliphs of their city.¹⁸⁸⁴

In his coverage of the first Mamluk investitures by the sultan Baybars, Ibn Iyās cites anonymous verses (*wa qad qāla al-qā’il*) celebrating the Mamluk sultan and emphasizing that something broken had been restored through great difficulty:

¹⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., 2:304.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., 2:457.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Ibid., 3:379.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Ibid., 5:74.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸¹ Ibid., 5:185.

¹⁸⁸² Ibid., 5:317-8.

¹⁸⁸³ For a discussion of Ibn Iyās’s composition and selection of poetry for his chronicle, see: Aḥmad Māhir Baqārī, *Ibn Iyās wa-al-luḡha: min kitābihi Badā’i’ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i’ al-duhūr* (Alexandria: al-Maktab al-Jamī‘ al-Ḥadīth, 1989), 17-61.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Irwin, “Mamluk History and Historians,” 170.

O lion of the Turks; O you who are their pillar!
O taker of vengeance after the horror!

You broke the tyranny and restored that which had been obliterated.
You crossed the Euphrates and restored the caliphate.¹⁸⁸⁵

Consolation poetry was often written at times of caliphal depositions, exile, or state incarcerations. Although explicitly addressed to the Abbasid caliph in question, it served the distinct social purpose of speaking to the collective Muslim conscience. Ibn Iyās chose to include the ruminations of *shaykh* Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn al-Wardī on the expulsion of the caliph al-Mustakfī to Qūş by al-Nāşir Muḥammad, who counseled patience and offered consolation:

They exiled you to Upper Egypt to suit a purpose
without benefit to religion or dogma.

Upper Egypt will not alter you so abide
within it as swords remain in their scabbards.¹⁸⁸⁶

Similarly, Barqūq’s unpopular 785/1383 deposition of the caliph al-Mutawakkil inspired the verses of Shihāb ibn al-‘Aṭṭār which highlight the virtue of the Abbasid family and draw attention to its spiritual autonomy from the Mamluk sultanate:

Rejoice Commander of the Faithful; for that which has happened
is the strongest proof of your enduring honor.

Fear not inactive aggression
for “no hand can extend beyond the hand of the caliphate.”¹⁸⁸⁷

Elsewhere, Ibn Iyās likens the difficult situation between al-Mutawakkil and Barqūq to the *bayt* of an unnamed poet:

Upon the head of a slave is a crown adorning his honor
While on the foot of the free man are shackles that worsen his humiliation.¹⁸⁸⁸

Fond of the added tone that verse could lend his chronicle, Ibn Iyās included poetry that encouraged reflection about what had befallen the Abbasid caliphs. Like many Mamluk chroniclers, his work interpreted the caliphs as quiet characters of dignity often persevering against unbridled Mamluk aggression.¹⁸⁸⁹ Veneration of the Abbasid family was also a powerful

¹⁸⁸⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i* ‘, 1:1:314.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Ibid., 1:1:474. See also: Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkira*, 2:297.

¹⁸⁸⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i* ‘, 1:2:333-4.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Ibid., 1:2:397.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., 1:2:399.

motif in poetry preserved by the *Badā'i*. The Abbasid presence in Cairo was widely viewed as hallowed subject matter, exemplified in verses commemorating the accession of the caliph al-Musta'in in 808/1406:

Our caliph must be allowed to feel pride in his family
for it is through his family that all people are gathered.¹⁸⁹⁰

When al-Ya'qūb ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ascended the caliphate as al-Mustamsik in 903/1497, verses reminding him to fear God and remember his virtuous ancestor were part of Ibn Iyās's account of the investiture:

O Commander of the Faithful, approach but do not
make request of any save for [God] who honored you.

Were al-'Abbās ever to return, surely he would say:
"God have mercy on he who sired you."¹⁸⁹¹

Drama and indignity drew the attention of many to the Abbasid succession squabble of the early sixteenth century. Concerning the first struggle between the Abbasid prince Khalīl and the newly invested al-Mustamsik, Ibn Iyās included verses in support of the authority of the caliph and his son against his cousin, "the envier" (*al-hāsīd*), claiming that something special in the soul of al-Mustamsik granted him victory in securing the caliphate.¹⁸⁹² The poetry of Ibn Iyās personifies the caliphal office, which, as a sentient being, does not wish to be defiled by the unworthy and envious Khalīl. The verses also allude to the Quranic Jacob (namesake of the caliph al-Mustamsik) and affirm that the divine election of the caliph could not be set aside on the whim of a challenger:

The lofty place [i.e., the caliphate] says to the one who aims for it:
"The master (*mawla*) has already solved the problem."

They claim that the envious one burned to be in that place
but "[it was] a desire within the soul of Jacob, which [God] satisfied."¹⁸⁹³

When Khalīl failed to win the caliphate a second time in early 920/1514, Ibn Iyās informs us that Cairenes rallied around al-Mustamsik and his son al-Mutawakkil as the rightful caliphs

¹⁸⁹⁰ Ibid., 1:2:747.

¹⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 3:380.

¹⁸⁹² Ibid., 3:378-9.

¹⁸⁹³ Ibid. See: Qur'ān, 12:68.

abused at the hands of conniving relatives.¹⁸⁹⁴ Popular poetry directed at the caliph again rang true for the author:

Have patience in the face of the enemy's torment
Surely your patience gives him battle.

Flames turn inwards, consuming themselves
if they fail in finding something to devour.¹⁸⁹⁵

The death of the caliph, like any great public figure, was an occasion for poets to commiserate and give voice to widespread mourning. Poets often called upon mourners to be patient when met by the loss of the caliph and advised cautious and sober remembrance of a "national treasure" in modern parlance, such as these verses accompanying the death of al-Mu'taḍid II in 845/1441:

O soul, be patient lest you die in misery
Verily the age is built upon all that which you despise.

Believe not in the happiness of abiding amenities
For each one holds the key to doors of despair.¹⁸⁹⁶

On the death of the caliph Ya'qūb al-Mustamsik in 927/1521, Ibn Iyās recorded a lengthy elegy (*marthiyya*) by the laureate Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qānṣūh.¹⁸⁹⁷ The verses open by stating that arrows of grief had found their bull's-eyes in the hearts of the people. The author laments the bygone era of al-Mustamsik's caliphate as a golden age and bemoans the loss of the caliph as the inauguration of a period of lawlessness wherein heroes and great kings were gone from the earth:

Where are the good peoples among us, the great families, the companions
and where are the kings and warriors?

God has wanted them all to pass on
Just as He has ordained upon Ya'qūb.¹⁸⁹⁸

The elegy likens the calamity for the people of the caliph's passing to the trials faced by the Biblical prophet Job (Ayyūb). Ibn Qānṣūh claims that the caliph died unhappy since his son

¹⁸⁹⁴ 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Malaṭī concluded his *Nayl al-amal* with an annal for 896/1491 and al-Suyūṭī expired in 911/1505. It seems that for the following years down to 928/1522, the *Badā'i* is most likely an original work. On Ibn Iyās's supposed reverence for both of his teachers, al-Malaṭī and al-Suyūṭī, see: Baqarī, *Ibn Iyās wa-al-lughā*, 9-13.

¹⁸⁹⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 4:361.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Ibid., 2:12.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Ibid., 5:389-90.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Ibid., 5:389.

al-Mutawakkil had been taken to Istanbul by the Ottoman sultan, before he lists the good deeds of the purebred Hashimite caliph, reminding the people of his particular kindness to orphans and widows, whom the poet in turn calls upon to weep and pray for the caliph's entry into the highest paradise (*jannat al-firdaws*) and for God to return the exiled Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil III to Egypt to reside in felicity with his people.¹⁸⁹⁹ The poem closes with Ibn Qānṣūh's own aspiration to die with the same lofty reputation as al-Mustamsik and a restatement of profound despair. It is unclear to what extent these compositions circulated among the public, or if they were intended for and shared by the scholars alone. It seems safe to say that they reflect a contemporary mood and encapsulate real anxiety in society about the fate of the caliphate, especially during the Ottoman occupation of Cairo followed by the expulsion of the caliph al-Mutawakkil III.¹⁹⁰⁰

Poetry often functioned as a social message board that reflected popular sentiments regarding a number of topics, including the Abbasid caliphate, and Ibn Iyās used such verses to great effect to illustrate his chronicle. As an Arabo-Muslim society, Mamluk Egypt relied on poetry as an important means of communication for various occasions, and it was important for the *'ulamā'* to be able to participate in the exchange.¹⁹⁰¹ Poets in the Mamluk period helped their audiences cope with their indignation about injustice against the caliph or grief at the time of his death,¹⁹⁰² and these literary efforts might be our best window into better understanding the attitudes, feelings, and political culture of the Mamluks themselves and perhaps even those of the masses they ruled. This cultural expression surely deserves a study of its own.¹⁹⁰³

As poets often found unhappy occasions on which to write about the caliphs, there tends to be more condolence poetry (*ta'ziya*/*'azā'*) rather than congratulatory poetry (*tahni'a*/*hanā'*), both being subcategories classified by Thomas Bauer under the headline of praise (*madḥ*/*madīḥ*) poetry.¹⁹⁰⁴ Although the poetry was dedicated to the caliphs or ostensibly composed to convey a message or sentiment about a certain caliph, the occasion of the text, as Bauer points out, "is

¹⁸⁹⁹ Ibid., 5:390.

¹⁹⁰⁰ As a member of the *awlād al-nās*, Ibn Iyās tended to read great gloom and doom into the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluks which he compared, perhaps in overwrought terms, both to Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt as well as the Mongol conquest of the Islamic world. See: Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman rule, 1517-1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 7-8.

¹⁹⁰¹ Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 108-9; idem, "Communication and Emotion: The Case of Ibn Nubātah's *Kindertotenlieder*," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7 (2003): 63-4, 74.

¹⁹⁰² Bauer, "Misunderstandings and New Approaches," 111.

¹⁹⁰³ Ibid., 115.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication," in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 29.

merely the starting point and not necessarily its *raison d'être*.”¹⁹⁰⁵ The Mamluk intelligentsia (religious scholars and trained bureaucrats) communicated with itself, often on a public stage that lent itself to the cultivation of a communal identity.

Caliphal Prestige

Ibn Iyās’s interest in the Abbasid caliphs, in addition to his cultural respect and historical awareness, also betrays a voyeuristic obsession with a royal family of Islamic notables in the public eye. For the events of his own time, the historian consistently depicts the caliphate as an Islamic asset with tremendous value to competing Mamluk factions. On several occasions he describes the significance of the caliphal presence and its “great prestige” (*ghāyat al-‘izz*) servicing a long string of sultanates.¹⁹⁰⁶ In touch with the caliphate as an office warranting special concessions from the state, Ibn Iyās describes Abbasid stewardship of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa as “a privilege inherent in the caliphate from time immemorial (*min qadīm al-zamān*); a showpiece of their greatness, which also allowed them to obtain some profit.”¹⁹⁰⁷

A caliph’s Hashimite heritage and Abbasid blood, possibly trumping other criteria, remain important to the author of the *Badā’i*. He celebrates, for example, the “pure-bred” caliph al-Mustamsik, whose parents were Hashimite cousins, unlike most other caliphs who had been sons of concubine mothers, whether Turkish, Circassian, or Abyssinian. Ibn Iyās calls attention to al-Mustamsik’s membership in a unique grouping of purely Hashimite caliphs including the fourth caliph ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, his son al-Ḥasan (who had briefly received *bay‘a* as caliph in 40-1/661 before conceding to Mu‘āwiya), and the Abbasid caliph al-Amīn.¹⁹⁰⁸

Ibn Iyās even extends his admiration to minor members of the Abbasid family, irrespective of whether they held the caliphal office. When discussing elder family members, the historian refers to them as “our master” (*mawlānā*) or “my master” (*sīdī* or *sayyidī*), perhaps reflecting their stature in civilian and some Mamluk circles.¹⁹⁰⁹ The author describes “my master Mūsā,” an elder son of al-Mutawakkil who never secured the family office as “a respected man whose wrongdoings cost him the caliphate.”¹⁹¹⁰ Despite his affection for the family, Ibn Iyās by no means concealed reports of bad behavior among individual members. He did, however,

¹⁹⁰⁵ Ibid., 44.

¹⁹⁰⁶ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 3:151.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5:192.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Ibid., 3:379. See also: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 132-54, 238-45.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 3:225, 5:104.

¹⁹¹⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 3:151, 225. See also: al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 10:188; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma’rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut, 1995), 3:988; ‘Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī al-Ḥanafī [al-Malaṭī], *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2002), 7:227, 8:16.

withhold honorifics in the case of the prince Khalīl, who sought to secure the family office for himself, bitterly contesting the caliphate of his cousin al-Mustamsik and waging an ugly public campaign that embarrassed the Abbasid family and outraged the Cairo populace that largely sided with al-Mustamsik and his son al-Mutawakkil III.¹⁹¹¹

The career of the final caliph al-Mutawakkil III after the battle of Marj Dābiq received an enthusiastic treatment, beginning as hero and intercessor for everyday Cairenes, then as a deportee to Istanbul unleashing profound sorrow among the masses, and finally a mere pawn corrupted by wealth who “lost his head and thought that the advantageous situation would persist, [heedless that] the balance beam (*al-qabbān*) was at its end.”¹⁹¹² Shortly afterwards, Ibn Iyās sketches the caliph’s fall from grace in Ottoman custody, complete with family quarrels over money, accusations of embezzlement and an unflattering Ottoman audit of Abbasid holdings in Cairo.

In sum, Ibn Iyās provides a valuable image of the Abbasid caliphate at the end of the Mamluk sultanate and many of the court traditions that developed around it.¹⁹¹³ Most importantly, he suggests and in some ways confirms the everyday importance of the caliphs in Cairo, as well as their visibility at the regime’s important moments, demonstrating that Mamluk leadership had links to higher power.

In the first decade of transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule, Ibn Iyās attempts to portray the caliphate as a bridge between the two political orders. At first, one learns, the Anatolian Turks accept the local importance of the Abbasid caliphate and appear ready to take it under their wing. But as the career of al-Mutawakkil III slowly crumbles into disappointment, the Ottomans, perhaps inexorably, disposed of the Abbasid caliphate in favor of their own dynastic legitimacy and inheritance of the lofty titles associated with becoming caretakers of the holy shrines of the Hijāz.¹⁹¹⁴

D. Syrian ‘*Ulamā*’ Historians

The best prospects for examining the resonance of the Abbasid caliphate in the Syrian provinces of the Mamluk sultanate come from surveying the cluster of histories composed by

¹⁹¹¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 3:380, 4:139-41. Ibn Iyās does, however, refer to Khalīl as “*sayyid*” in verses composed on the occasion of the latter’s death. See: Baqarī, *Ibn Iyās wa-al-lugha*, 29-30.

¹⁹¹² Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 5:158.

¹⁹¹³ For his comment on Abbasid ritual innovated in the Mamluk period, see: Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*’, 1:2:124, 2:395.

¹⁹¹⁴ Colin Imber, “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth,” *Turcica* 19 (1987): 25; Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 1973), 33-4.

Syrian religious scholars, many of them the students of the Ḥanbalī theologian Ibn Taymiyya, centered in late thirteenth/early fourteenth century Damascus. The authors likely embraced and emulated the historical tradition started by the *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-a'yān*, a universal chronicle attributed to the Iraqi historian Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256).¹⁹¹⁵ Among the important historians writing in the Mamluk period were: 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Shāma (d. 665/1267-8) and Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298), followed some decades later by Mūsā al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326), Muḥammad al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338), al-Qāsim al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339), Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), 'Umar ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349), Muḥammad al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363) and Ismā'īl ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), and the writings of fifteenth and sixteenth century Damascene scholars like Abū Bakr ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448) and Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548).¹⁹¹⁶

Defining characteristics of this “Syrian school,” if it can be identified in such a way, include a great deal of mutual borrowing and adherence to a format dividing historical works into annals that included obituaries, often of notables and religious scholars, as well as information about their teachers, appointments, and scholarly careers.¹⁹¹⁷ Overall, the Syrian *'ulamā'* historians oriented themselves towards a holistic view of Islamic history and origins, and looked for a broader significance beyond the current realities of the Mamluk sultanate.¹⁹¹⁸

One chronicler who had worked as an Ayyubid administrator before serving the Mamluks was the Damascene scholar Abū Shāma.¹⁹¹⁹ He was contemporary to the tragic events of Baghdad in 656/1258, the murder of the caliph al-Musta'ṣim, and the rise of the Mamluks. In some cases he remained sympathetic to the Ayyubids, though he viewed the arrival and investiture of an Abbasid in Cairo as a great victory for Islam.

Abū Shāma provided a contemporary account of Baybars's investitures of the first two caliphs in his *Dhayl 'alā al-rawḍatayn*. His *Tarājim al-rijāl* provides an important glimpse of the widespread jubilation among Damascenes upon hearing about the restored caliphate. In a well-known passage, the qadi of Damascus reads the communiqué from Baybars at the 'Ādiliyya *madrassa*, and Abū Shāma captures the reaction:

¹⁹¹⁵ Little, *Introduction*, 57; Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 240-1; Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 32. On Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:305.

¹⁹¹⁶ Li Guo's recent scholarship has underscored the importance of the Syrian historiographical tradition for Mamluk studies. See: *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, 1:1-96; idem, “History Writing,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 451-3.

¹⁹¹⁷ There is some scholarly debate as to whether we can describe it as a “school.”

¹⁹¹⁸ I thank Stephen Humphreys for pointing this out in his comments on my 2011 MESA paper.

¹⁹¹⁹ Despite earning a living through official appointments at religious institutions under the Ayyubids, Abū Shāma had a reputation for spurning those in power. See: Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 31.

The people were extraordinarily joyful (*surūran ‘aẓīman*) with [the Abbasid restoration] and gave thanks to God for the return of the Abbasid caliphate after the heathen Ṭaṭars had severed it and murdered the caliph al-Musta‘ṣim ibn al-Zāhir who was the nephew of the one given *bay‘a* in Egypt.¹⁹²⁰

Whether or not Abū Shāma was attempting to capture a popular zeitgeist or projecting his own feelings onto the event, he suggests elsewhere that Egypt underwent a dramatic change in status after the arrival of the caliphate. There may also have been a widespread notion that Cairo, the caliph’s new seat, was worthy of lofty respect:

When the caliphate moved from Baghdad to Egypt, the significance of the latter dwarfed that of other lands. The sultan of Egypt became the most valuable of people and Egypt transformed into a land for the ‘*ulamā*’, virtuous scholars (*al-fuḍalā*) and ascetics to dwell while the *sunna* grew in importance and power in the land of innovation.¹⁹²¹ This was the mystery of the Abbasids -- that wherever they should go, they would be honored and celebrated [...] Did you not see [evidence of] the mystery during their residence in Baghdad? They then went to Egypt which became akin to the City of Peace (*Dār al-Salām*, i.e. Baghdad). This is one of the divine mysteries of God -- that wherever the Abbasids reside, so too does the caliphate.¹⁹²²

Abū Shāma’s account was particularly important to later Syrian historians such as al-Dhahabī and al-Yūnīnī, who cited it extensively, as well as historians in Egypt like al-Suyūṭī who may even have absorbed and re-imagined Abū Shāma’s words.¹⁹²³

The Syrian Circle of the Early Fourteenth Century

Syrian historians working in the century after Abū Shāma’s death tended to be religious scholars with a secondary interest in historiography. Many shared similar backgrounds, lived in Damascus, and were expert in ḥadīth transmission.¹⁹²⁴ Unlike their Egyptian counterparts, they had fewer entanglements with the sultan’s court and were predisposed toward covering local Syrian affairs.¹⁹²⁵ They focused on religious issues such as the trial of their teacher Ibn Taymiyya, the upholding of *sharī‘a*, and more broadly, religious affairs in the context of political events.¹⁹²⁶

¹⁹²⁰ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā‘īl Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-al-sābi‘*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Kawtharī (Beirut, 1974), 213.

¹⁹²¹ On Abū Shāma’s strong opposition to innovated practices, see: Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography*, 47-52.

¹⁹²² Quoted in Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i*, 1:1:321 and attributed to Abū Shāma.

¹⁹²³ See below, p. 364.

¹⁹²⁴ Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 187-8; Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 29-31.

¹⁹²⁵ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 43.

¹⁹²⁶ Little, *Introduction*, 46; idem, “The Historical and Historiographical Significance of the Detention of Ibn Taymiyya,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 311-27.

This “Syrian cluster,” particularly al-Jazarī, al-Birzālī, and al-Yūnīnī, are also noteworthy for the level at which they shared and edited each others’ works.¹⁹²⁷ Later Syrian authors such as al-Kutubī, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Kathīr took information from the earlier three, perpetuating a great similarity among the works and complicating the process of discovering the origins of common information.¹⁹²⁸

Al-Yūnīnī’s *Dhayl al-mir’āt al-zamān*, a supplement (*dhayl*) to Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī’s *Mir’āt al-zamān*, continues from the year 654/1256. Although al-Yūnīnī is said to have continued the coverage to 711/1311, the widely available Hyderabad edition ends at 687/1288.¹⁹²⁹ It is fortunate that al-Yūnīnī covered the years (659/1261 and 661/1262) in which Baybars invested the two caliphs in Cairo, as copies of those corresponding annals in al-Jazarī’s *Ḥawādith* have not survived, and al-Birzālī’s *Muqtaḍī*, a *dhayl* of Abū Shāma’s history, begins with the year 665/1266-7. Based on modern intertextual studies, it is likely that al-Jazarī’s coverage of the investiture ceremonies of 659/1261 and 661/1262 closely resembles that of al-Yūnīnī.¹⁹³⁰ The latter typically begins each year with the name of the reigning caliph until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad. The year 659/1260-1 begins with the notation that there was “no caliph for the Muslims.”¹⁹³¹ After the death of al-Mustaṣir billāh in 661/1262-3, al-Yūnīnī repeats the statement.¹⁹³²

The real value of the information preserved in al-Yūnīnī’s *Dhayl* derives from the testimony of Zayn al-Dīn Šāliḥ ibn al-Bannā’, a close confederate of the caliph al-Ḥākim whose account may well have appeared in al-Jazarī’s lost annals. Ibn al-Bannā’ accompanied the caliph during his escape from Baghdad, witnessed his seeking of support among the bedouin tribes, the investiture in Aleppo, skirmishes with the Mongols, and ultimately his arrival at Cairo in 660/1261.¹⁹³³ These reports of Ibn al-Bannā’, widely disseminated among the Syrian circle, also became a source valuable to later historians such as al-Suyūṭī and centuries later al-Jabartī.¹⁹³⁴ Ibn al-Bannā’ recounts his eyewitness accounts of the caliph, and in true partisan fashion, relayed a

¹⁹²⁷ The extent and nature of the sharing has been intensely debated in recent scholarship. See: Little, *Introduction*, 92; Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 92-6; Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 240-1.

¹⁹²⁸ Little, *Introduction*, 46-73, 94-8; Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 94-118; Li Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī’s Dhayl Mir’āt al-zamān* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 41-86, 94-6; idem, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 25.

¹⁹²⁹ Li Guo has edited, translated, and published al-Yūnīnī’s annals spanning 697-701/1297-1302 as the second volume of his *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, though a complete copy of the manuscript was not available to the author at the time of writing.

¹⁹³⁰ Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*, 1:42-59; Little, *Introduction*, 57-61; Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 22-6.

¹⁹³¹ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:434, 2:87.

¹⁹³² Ibid., 1:530.

¹⁹³³ Ibid., 1:484-7, 2:153. See also: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 22.

¹⁹³⁴ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 23.

narration that the physical world saw tangible effects of the disruption of the caliphate: the planet Venus was said to have disappeared after the murder of al-Mu‘taṣim, not to be seen again until the advent of al-Ḥākim.¹⁹³⁵

Interest in all matters religious and Syrian directed al-Yūnīnī’s coverage of the Cairo caliphate. In addition to the details and text of the investiture announcement sent to Syria,¹⁹³⁶ the author provides extensive details on the first caliphal visit to Damascus with Baybars,¹⁹³⁷ campaigns fought on the outskirts of Syria and Mesopotamia,¹⁹³⁸ and the alliance between al-Mustaṣir and al-Ḥākim intended to “erect the *dawla* of Banī ‘Abbās.”¹⁹³⁹ Events in al-Yūnīnī’s *Dhayl* place more focus on Syria, including the caliph al-Ḥākim’s period of vagabondage with Syrian bedouin tribes,¹⁹⁴⁰ as well as his brief public appearance at Friday prayer in Damascus and many of the details involving al-Mustaṣir’s campaign to retake Baghdad, which launched from Syria.¹⁹⁴¹

Al-Yūnīnī makes the presence of the ‘*ulamā*’ a primary focus of al-Mustaṣir’s investiture ceremony.¹⁹⁴² His *Dhayl* also reports rare details of al-Mustaṣir’s first *khuṭba*, opening with a reading from the Qur’ān followed by a passage expounding upon the virtues of the Abbasid family and the obligation of *jihād*.¹⁹⁴³ The author also encapsulates the close symbolic relationship between Baybars and the caliph, observing that after Friday prayer on 10 Dhū al-Qa‘da 659/6 October 1261, the pair left together, “the sultan walking in [the caliph’s] retinue (*yamshī fī khidmatihī*).”¹⁹⁴⁴

On the death of the caliph al-Ḥākim in 701/1302, al-Yūnīnī includes a great deal of detail perhaps attributable to al-Jazarī.¹⁹⁴⁵ Egyptian historians like al-Nuwayrī also captured much of the same information, which may have originated from the Syrians. If al-Yūnīnī was in doubt about the legitimacy of the caliph, he carefully expressed his observation that al-Ḥākim, similar only to the first two Abbasids of Baghdad, al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr, was the only caliph whose father and great-grandfather had not been caliphs.¹⁹⁴⁶

¹⁹³⁵ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:484. Cf. Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz*, 8:86; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 92.

¹⁹³⁶ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1:451-2.

¹⁹³⁷ Ibid., 1:453, 2:106-8.

¹⁹³⁸ Ibid., 2:109-11.

¹⁹³⁹ Ibid., 1:455, 2:153.

¹⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2:95.

¹⁹⁴¹ Ibid., 1:453-4, 2:124-5.

¹⁹⁴² Ibid., 2:123.

¹⁹⁴³ Ibid., 1:442-3.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1:453.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Haarmann believed that for the annals after 678/1279, al-Yūnīnī was largely indebted to the work of al-Jazarī. See: *Quellenstudien*, 25.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 75.

Al-Birzālī's *Muqtafā li-Ta'rīkh*, a continuation of Abū Shāma, adopts a strict chronological framework that includes more biographies and obituaries than historical events. His first report on the caliphate concerns the 676/1277 marriage connection between the lines of al-Mustansir and al-Ḥākim.¹⁹⁴⁷ The *Muqtafā*, like al-Jazarī's *Ḥawādith*, devotes a small space to the caliph al-Ḥākim's 691/1292 *khuṭba* for al-Ashraf Khalīl urging *jihād* against the Armenians at Qal'at al-Rūm, although the latter goes into greater depth.¹⁹⁴⁸ Since, like al-Yūnīnī, much of his interest lay in Syria and its religious scholars, al-Birzālī's coverage of caliphal issues tends to be sparse and brief. Writing on events from the Syrian perspective, al-Birzālī mentions the arrival of the post (*al-barīd*) bringing news of the caliph al-Ḥākim's death in 701/1302, noting the details of the burial, offering prayers for the Abbasid family and remarking that the hallowed state affair barred attendees from riding on horseback. The *minbars* of Damascus were then ordered to call out the name of his successor, al-Mustakfī billāh, and bade people all over Syria to offer special prayers for his father, "the caliph of the Muslims."¹⁹⁴⁹

In what remains to us of al-Jazarī's *Ḥawādith*, the author's interest in matters of the caliphate extends to the Zaydī "caliph" of Yemen,¹⁹⁵⁰ as well as a rival caliphate appearing in Mecca in the year 725/1325, which Mamluk authorities scrambled to suppress for obvious reasons.¹⁹⁵¹ After several "missing" annals, al-Jazarī's coverage of the Abbasid caliphate resumes in 737/1336-7 amid the deteriorating relationship between sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the caliph al-Mustakfī who was relocated to quarters within the citadel along with his family,¹⁹⁵² then returned to a private family residence the next year.¹⁹⁵³ While al-Jazarī died before the caliph's expulsion to Qūṣ, he still prays for the victory of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (*'izza naṣruhu*), perhaps implying support for the sultan against his foes, even if that included the Abbasid caliph, who in the eyes of some *'ulamā'*, may have betrayed the rightful sultan in favor of the usurper Baybars al-Jāshinkīr in 709/1309-10.

Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, another prominent member of the Syrian circle, known largely for his religious scholarship, concluded his *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* in the year 700/1301 even though he

¹⁹⁴⁷ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 1:404; al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 3:235; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:277.

¹⁹⁴⁸ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 2:273; Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Ta'rīkh ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a'yān min abnā'ihī*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1998), 1:56-7.

¹⁹⁴⁹ Al-Birzālī, *Muqtafā*, 3:177.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Al-Jazari, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, 2:83.

¹⁹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:82.

¹⁹⁵² *Ibid.*, 3:875.

¹⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3:929.

lived for another half century.¹⁹⁵⁴ Al-Dhahabī also sat in the salons of Ibn Taymiyya and al-Birzālī and accessed the works of al-Jazarī and al-Yūnīnī.¹⁹⁵⁵ Thus, al-Dhahabī is the repository for what is known about the caliph al-Ḥākim’s time in Aleppo, preserving information on the Banū Taymiyya’s involvement in the Syrian *bay’a* in Ḥarrān, presumably through his interactions with Ibn Taymiyya.¹⁹⁵⁶

Robert Irwin characterized al-Dhahabī as “hostile to the Mamluk regime, not accepting the legitimacy of the caliphate which they had established in Cairo.”¹⁹⁵⁷ I have found no indication of this sentiment in al-Dhahabī’s historical writing, or anything that suggests a disagreement with earlier sources on the investiture of the caliph, and, in fact, al-Dhahabī preserves the powerful testimony of the notable religious scholar Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām who officiated at the 660/1261 *bay’a* ceremony of the caliph al-Mustaṣṣir.¹⁹⁵⁸ It is hard to accept that al-Dhahabī would go as far as to *reject* the legitimacy of the contemporary caliphate in a departure from the consensus that the Mamluks were on the right side of history *vis-à-vis* their support for the Abbasid line. On the contrary, al-Dhahabī simultaneously acknowledged the widely accepted position of al-Mustaṣṣir as the thirty-eighth Abbasid caliph,¹⁹⁵⁹ and praised both his courage and fitness for office.¹⁹⁶⁰ Upon describing the investiture of the caliph of his own time, al-Ḥākim II (741-53/1341-52), al-Dhahabī writes, “[The caliph] received the pledge of allegiance and sat with the sultan atop the throne of sovereignty as the qadis and others pledged allegiance; all praise is to God!”¹⁹⁶¹

Another student of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Kathīr, wrote an important continuation to Abū Shāma’s history, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya fī al-ta’rīkh*, in which he offered frank images of sultans and caliphs. Like al-Dhahabī, Ibn Kathīr recognized al-Mustaṣṣir as the thirty-eighth caliph of his line and also hinted that the ill-fated Baghdad campaign had been the caliph’s own idea.¹⁹⁶²

With large portions of these works missing or of indeterminate origin, it is difficult to formulate solid conclusions about the reception of the Cairo caliphate among circles of Syrian ‘*ulamā*’-historians. Compared with the prevalent acceptance of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo by their counterparts among the ‘*ulamā*’ and bureaucrats based in that city, the reality of geographic

¹⁹⁵⁴ However, a later volume written by the author, covers notable events and obituaries down to 746/1345, and has been referenced in this dissertation as *Ta’rīkh al-Islām* volume 53 (2004 Beirut edition, edited by ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī).

¹⁹⁵⁵ Little, *Introduction*, 62.

¹⁹⁵⁶ Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 25.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Irwin, “Mamluk History and Historians,” 162.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 23:169. See also pp. 46-7.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-‘ibar fī khabar man ghabar* (Kuwait, 1960-6), 5:259.

¹⁹⁶⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 23:169.

¹⁹⁶¹ Al-Dhahabī, *Duwal al-Islām*, 2:188.

¹⁹⁶² Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13:231.

distance from the seat of power must have made for differences in Syria's relationship with the Abbasids.¹⁹⁶³ No Syrian city could boast of being home to the caliphate and in their historiography, some authors displayed evidence of the way the restored caliphate was interpreted in the provinces.¹⁹⁶⁴ While they claimed that their populations rejoiced at the investiture of the new caliph and mourned upon learning of his death, the Syrian authors would likely encounter the Abbasid caliph solely through his periodical visits to Damascus or Aleppo embedded in the sultan's army. Under such circumstances, the Commander of the Faithful, with the four chief qadis close at hand, would be one member among many of the official civilian retinue: in that situation, the caliph would appear as an *extension* of the sultan, merely another reminder of the latter's sovereignty. In short, any Syrian connection to the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk times, compared to Cairo, was far less immediate (though symbolically, perhaps no less intimate).

Nonetheless, Lutz Wiederholz's study of the *Zāhirī* movement in late fourteenth century Damascus provides important evidence that even there, the caliphate was central to religious identity, public life, and thought, not to mention a *cause célèbre* among disaffected members of the Syrian religious establishment.¹⁹⁶⁵ Harkening back to the classical Abbasid caliphs, many demanded a truly reinvigorated version of the office that would have been a far cry from the figurehead confined in Cairo.

Syrian scholars, in spite of their provincial status, kept abreast of political events involving the caliph and included them in their histories. Modern specialists conclude that sources produced in Syria during the first half of the fourteenth century comprise the most comprehensive coverage of the mid-Bahārī period and were relied upon by Egyptian historians for events in Cairo during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹⁹⁶⁶

Although their physical separation from Cairo afforded Syrian religious scholars the luxury of relative autonomy from the ruling regime, it behooved most of them to recognize the legitimacy of the Abbasid line in Cairo. After all, they read and interpreted history and tradition the same way. The perpetuation of the caliphate partially underwrote their own authority as '*ulamā*', just as it did their Cairene counterparts. Thus, whatever their true feelings, the Syrian historians clearly had a vested interest in showing that the Mamluks, at the very least, had done

¹⁹⁶³ On the regional biases and Egypt-centered nature of later Mamluk historiography, see: Hirschler, "Studying Mamluk Historiography," 169-71.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Syria, of course, had been the former base of the Umayyad caliphate and Syrian historians were proud of the region's significance in pre-Islamic Biblical history. See for example, the prolegomena to the *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq* of the Syrian historian and scholar 'Alī ibn 'Asākir (d. 529/1125).

¹⁹⁶⁵ Wiederhold, "Zahiri Revolt," 224-6.

¹⁹⁶⁶ Little, "Historiography," 427-8.

the right thing by reviving the caliphate.¹⁹⁶⁷ Although they were not in positions that required interaction with the Abbasid caliphate, they were nevertheless committed to legitimizing and strengthening its religious foundation by speaking about its correct establishment and hypothetical importance.¹⁹⁶⁸

Authors such as al-Jazarī and al-Birzālī, perhaps in the interest of brevity, mentioned little of the caliph's explicit involvement in investiture ceremonies. We lack many of their annals for Baybars and Qalāwūn,¹⁹⁶⁹ but coverage of sultans such as al-Ashraf Khalīl, Kitbughā, Lājīn, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad mention the participation of the chief qadis and other notables while frequently excluding the caliph. Cairo-based authors such as al-Nuwayrī (a contemporary who covered the same period and heavily used their work) provide more frequent mention of the caliph's role in investiture. It may be that many considered the detail superfluous in their works that heavily focused on the deaths of scholars and qadis -- the *true* movers and shakers in the religious sphere, in their estimation.

Support for the caliphate among members of the Syrian religious establishment was linked to support for the Mamluk regime. Like their Egyptian counterparts influenced by their work, Syrian historians were aware that their Abbasids suffered in comparison with the great names of the past. Nevertheless, the caliph himself could not be ignored, because his existence served as proof of the ruling regime's commitment to defend Islam and project its influence.¹⁹⁷⁰

Historiographical works produced in Syria became less abundant in the later fourteenth century, making way for a new wave of Cairo-based historiography that drew heavily from the Syrian annals but focused firmly on events in Cairo. Thereafter, we lose our Syrian perspective of the Cairo caliphate altogether during much of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹⁹⁷¹

E. Later Egyptian Chroniclers

It is difficult to identify "schools" among the Egyptian and Syrian writers of Mamluk historiography. Later chroniclers tended to focus more heavily on events in Egypt. Claims of the Abbasid caliph's sanctity and universal authority were met with the greatest acceptance in Cairo, the locus of the regime which vigorously proclaimed its access to the caliphs. Later histories

¹⁹⁶⁷ Al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2:187.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 23:168-70.

¹⁹⁶⁹ However, some of al-Jazarī's annals (682-7/1283-9) for the reign of Qalāwūn are preserved in Haarmann, *Quellenstudien*, 2-116 (Arabic).

¹⁹⁷⁰ For a discussion of the projection of Mamluk authority in Syria, see: Yehoshua Frenkel, "Public Projection of Power in Mamluk Bilād al-Shām," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (2007): 39-53.

¹⁹⁷¹ It is unclear why this is the case. There was still a tradition of Syrian historiography in the works of Ibn Ṣaṣra, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, and Ibn Ṭulūn, but never again a close cluster of chroniclers similar to the fourteenth century scholars.

penned by Egyptian-based historians, like any denizens of an imperial capital, tended to envision Cairo as the center of the world. Thus in broad terms, the religious authority of the Abbasid caliphate, such as it was, was *accepted* in scholarly circles, even if it was often downplayed or ignored outright.

Egyptian historians came from all walks of society: statesmen, religious scholars, chancery clerks, many of whom blended a style mixing colloquial with high class literary Arabic.¹⁹⁷² One important cluster of historians and biographers arose around the traditionist and learned luminary Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and his students al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī.

1. Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442)

Resoundingly considered *the* iconic historian of the Mamluk period, the so-called “*shaykh al-mu’arrikhīn*” Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, despite his capacities as a market inspector (*muḥtasib*), deputy qadi, mosque orator, and teacher, was not close to the Mamluk regime.¹⁹⁷³ Adopting a civilian point of view in much of his historical writing, al-Maqrīzī’s historiography focuses on Egypt. His love for Cairo and its past allows him to embrace even earlier dynasties living there, such as the Fatimids and Ayyubids, as well as his contemporary Circassian Burjī Mamluks.¹⁹⁷⁴ He loathed the Mamluk sultan Barqūq and after his retirement enjoyed a life of writing and apparent freedom to express his opinions. In the decades after Barqūq, al-Maqrīzī also witnessed the pseudo-sultanate of the ill-fated caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn billāh (815/1412), who was stripped of authority after serving the purposes of al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh.¹⁹⁷⁵

Familiar with bygone centuries of Islamic history, al-Maqrīzī, as a chronicler of his own age, commented frequently on the status of the Abbasid caliphate of his time and seldom shied away from criticizing the Mamluk regime whenever he thought it fell short of realizing traditional

¹⁹⁷² Guo, “Mamluk Historiographic Studies,” 39.

¹⁹⁷³ Al-Maqrīzī’s reputation has preceded him both inside and outside Mamluk studies. The “fame” of al-Maqrīzī may be attributable to the simple fact that his chronicle was first to become widely available to modern scholars. Nevertheless, al-Maqrīzī has continued to inspire scholarly interest. Volume 7, no. 2 of the *Mamlūk Studies Review* (2003) was devoted to the historian, although aspersions concerning his authenticity have since led some specialists to question whether his chronicle is worthy of its renown. On this point, see: Little, *Introduction*, 76-7. Recent research by Frédéric Bauden also suggests that some of al-Maqrīzī’s work may have been plagiarized: “Maqriziana IX: Should al-Maqrīzī Be Thrown Out with the Bath Water? The Question of His Plagiarism of al-Awḥadī’s *Khīṭaṭ* and the Documentary Evidence,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 159-232.

¹⁹⁷⁴ P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 208-9; Irmeli Perho, “Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī as Historians of Contemporary Events,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (C. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 120. On al-Maqrīzī’s possible Fatimid descent as an explanation for his sympathy toward the dynasty, see: Nasser Rabbat, “Who Was al-Maqrīzī? A Biographical Sketch,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 6-10.

¹⁹⁷⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:207-44; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:211-5.

Sunni political theory.¹⁹⁷⁶ Indeed, as a trained scholar and public official, al-Maqrīzī's historical vision of an ideal Islamic state demanded a role for the 'ulamā' in guiding the community as well as their inclusion in the important task of advising Mamluk sultans on the most efficient application of *sharī'a*.¹⁹⁷⁷

Al-Maqrīzī composed four works of varying length on the legacy of the Abbasid caliphs although the caliphs of his own time seem to find no mention in any of them.¹⁹⁷⁸ Several commissioned treatises provided space for the author to grapple with lingering questions about earlier epochs of Islamic history and what constituted proper leadership of the *umma*. His lengthy biographical work on the Prophet, *Kitāb Imtā' al-asmā' bi-mā lil-rasūl min al-anbā' wa-al-amwāl wa-al-ḥafada wa-al-matā'*, contained biography as well as essays on claims to leadership after the death of Muḥammad.¹⁹⁷⁹ A similarly important work emphasizing support for the Hashimite clan (comprised of the Alids and Abbasids) came in his *Kitāb ma'arifāt mā yajib li-Āl al-Bayt al-Nabawī min al-ḥaqq 'alā man 'adāhum*, written in 841-2/1438 after the historian returned to Cairo from a sojourn in Mecca. *Kitāb ma'arifa* parses five verses of the Qur'ān on their significance to the caliphate and prefaces the author's defense of the historical right of the Hashimites to leadership of the Muslim community.¹⁹⁸⁰

Al-Maqrīzī tackled the early caliphs of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties in his most famous work on the subject, *Kitāb al-nizā' wa-al-takhāṣum fī mā bayna Banī Umayya wa-Banī Ḥāshim*.¹⁹⁸¹ He discussed the historical rivalries between the families and while he never portrayed the Umayyads positively, al-Maqrīzī likewise denounced Abbasid atrocities committed during their early eighth century revolutionary period.¹⁹⁸² *Kitāb al-nizā'* traces the Abbasids from

¹⁹⁷⁶ Levanoni, "Al-Maqrīzī's Account," 103-4.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷⁸ In his research on al-Maqrīzī's Abbasid epistles, Paul Cobb has kindly related to me that none of the manuscripts he is currently editing and preparing for publication through Brill's *Maqriziana* series appear to make reference to the contemporary Abbasid caliphate in Cairo. For recent studies on al-Maqrīzī's pro-Hashimite views, see: C. E. Bosworth, "Al-Maqrīzī's Epistle 'Concerning What Has Come Down to Us About the Banu Umayya and the Banu l-'Abbas,'" in *Studia Arabica and Islamica: Festschrift for Ihsan 'Abbās*, ed. Wadād al-Qāḍī (Beirut, 1981), 39-45; idem, "Al-Maqrīzī's Exposition of the Formative Period in Islamic History and its Cosmic Significance: The *Kitāb al-Nizā' wa-al-Takhāṣum*," in *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge: In Honour of William Montgomery Watt*, ed. A. T. Welsh and P. Cachia (Edinburgh, 1979), 93-104; Paul M. Cobb, "Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism, and the Early Caliphates," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 69-81.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Cobb, "Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism," 71.

¹⁹⁸⁰ Ibid., 71-3, 80.

¹⁹⁸¹ This work has been translated by C. E. Bosworth as *Al-Maqrīzī's "Book of Contention and Strife Concerning the Relations between the Banū Umayyah and the Banū Ḥāshim"* (Manchester, 1980).

¹⁹⁸² Bosworth, "Al-Maqrīzī's Epistle," 41-4; Cobb, "Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism," 70, 78. Al-Maqrīzī criticized both caliphal houses in his *Kitāb al-nizā'*, though he valued the piety of the caliphs and renounced anyone responsible for the murder of other Muslims or Hashimites.

pre-Islamic times, with little elaboration, to the start of the Mamluk era.¹⁹⁸³ A truncated version of the work appeared as *Kitāb fī dhikr mā warada fī Banī Umayya wa-Banī al-‘Abbās*, composed in Mecca in 837/1433 for a patron, perhaps of Abbasid descent, which takes a decidedly pro-Abbasid tone.¹⁹⁸⁴ After a harsh section on the Umayyads, al-Maqrīzī praises members of the Abbasid family from al-‘Abbās to al-Saffāh and champions their claims, emphasizing Abbasid preeminence in Islamic history.¹⁹⁸⁵

Al-Maqrīzī’s treatises on the early age of Islam are understandably removed from his work on the contemporary Abbasid caliphate detailed in the later annals of his *Sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*. Similar to Ibn Khaldūn in many ways, al-Maqrīzī read a practical ending to the Abbasid caliphate in its eradication by the Mongol conqueror Hülāgū. Although Baybars restored the line in Cairo, al-Maqrīzī failed to see its “return” as a refutation of his argument, aware as he was of the caliphate’s nominal nature in his own time.¹⁹⁸⁶ Al-Maqrīzī’s discussion of the caliphate in *Kitāb al-nizā‘* remains pragmatic and cognizant of long-standing institutional problems dating back to the Umayyads and worsening under the early Abbasids. For al-Maqrīzī, the notion that leadership ought to remain in the hands of a Qurayshī *imām* is an important proposition for which he gives much support in the form of prophetic traditions (*aḥādīth*). While defending the historical right of the Abbasids as Hashimites, the historian does not shy from listing their faults including violent purges of the Umayyads, the Mu‘tazilī innovations of al-Ma‘mūn and al-Musta‘ṣim, as well as the latter’s fatal overreliance on Turkish slave soldiers, an error repeated in Mamluk Egypt, in al-Maqrīzī’s view.¹⁹⁸⁷ In his treatise on contemporary economics, *Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma*, al-Maqrīzī appears to link the debasement of silver currency to an analogous debasement of the caliphate under Turkish amirs:

[The Turks] came to hold power jointly with the Abbasids. The state became expert in luxury, and the light of divine guidance faded. Precepts of the divine law and religious prescriptions changed when the Turks innovated and invented ways that God did not allow, among which was the adulteration of *dirhams*.¹⁹⁸⁸

In *Kitāb al-nizā‘*, however, al-Maqrīzī clarifies that the Abbasid family had long since inherited a troubled office that had “grown weak, and its supports had become shaky, and people

¹⁹⁸³ Cobb, “Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism,” 80.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Bosworth, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Epistle,” 40-5; Cobb, “Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism,” 72, 79.

¹⁹⁸⁵ Bosworth, “Al-Maqrīzī’s Epistle,” 42-4.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s Book of Contention and Strife*, 32-3.

¹⁹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁹⁸⁸ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Ighāthat al-umma bi-kashf al-ghumma*, tr. Adel Allouche as *Mamluk Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī’s Ighāthah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1994), 65.

had successively seized power over the Muslim community by force of arms.”¹⁹⁸⁹ The Abbasids, through the help of the Persians and Khurāsānīs, seized office by force.¹⁹⁹⁰ During the dynasty’s tenure in Baghdad, their rule from the center deteriorated until “all political power transferred from the Banū ‘Abbās (Abbasids) to the Banū Buwayh (Buyids) of Daylam, and all that was left to the Banū al-‘Abbās of the caliphate was the name, without any freedom of executive action.” While symbolic heads of Islam, the caliphs remained subject to the Buyids and Seljuqs who retained true power over the caliphs “as a master (*mālik*) does over his slave (*mamlūk*)” until Hülāgü’s conquest.¹⁹⁹¹

It is at this point in the *Kitāb al-nizā’* that al-Maqrīzī, a versatile Muslim historian with a working knowledge of Old Testament lore, finds parallels between the fortunes of the post-Mongol Abbasid caliphs and the Children of Israel in the wake of Nebuchadnezzar. He wrote that foreign invasions spelled the end for both lines, and neither Jews nor Muslims ever united under a single man as leader of their religion amidst a tremendous loss of political power that saw the rise of numerous regional rulers, including the Mamluk sultans of Egypt and Syria:

Likewise after Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the Children of Israel’s power, the Israelites acquired a regime in which they were under the domination of the Greeks and others, whilst Jerusalem was being rebuilt and after their return from the captivity. Similarly, the Turkish rulers of Egypt set up one of the Banū ‘Abbās as caliph, but he had no power to command or forbid, nor was any decree of his effective in any way.¹⁹⁹²

Al-Maqrīzī as Historian of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

Throughout his historical output concerning his own times, al-Maqrīzī sets forth his view of the Abbasid caliphate as a bankrupt institution comprising little more than its name. An oft-quoted and particularly strong passage of the *Sulūk* has been cited by numerous modern historians as the “proof” of Abbasid irrelevance to Mamluk governance:

The Turkish sovereigns of the Mamluk dynasty installed a man as caliph to whom they gave the name and titles suitable to the caliphs. He had no authority and not even the right to express his opinion. He passed his time among the amirs, the major officers, the scribes, the qadis, and made visits to them to thank them for the dinners and pleasantries to which they invited him.¹⁹⁹³

¹⁹⁸⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-nizā’ wa-al-takhāṣuṣ fī-mā bayna Banī Umayya wa-Banī Hāshim* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1988), 95-6; Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s Book of Contention and Strife*, 87-8.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-nizā’*, 109; Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s Book of Contention and Strife*, 102.

¹⁹⁹² Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-nizā’*, 115-6; Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s Book of Contention and Strife*, 107.

¹⁹⁹³ Among the modern historians to cite this passage, originally translated to English by Sir Thomas Arnold (*Caliphate*, 102) from the French of Edgard Blochet (*Histoire d’Égypte de Makrizi* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1908), 76), are: Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 355; Jean-Claude Garcin, “Histoire, opposition

In two of his other works, al-Maqrīzī took the career of the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn as a point of departure from which to sketch the Abbasid dynasty of Cairo. The possibly earlier of the two narratives appeared in his topographical study of Cairo, *al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-al-i‘tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār fī Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (hereafter the *Khiṭaṭ*), during the course of a history of the “Kings of Egypt since the building of the citadel.”¹⁹⁹⁴ After discussing the Ayyubids (*al-Akrād*) and Baḥrī Mamluks, the historian discusses the Circassian line of Mamluk sultans until he arrives at the brief reign of al-Musta‘īn, after which he embarks on the “origin of those caliphs in Egypt [...] [after] the world had been void of a caliph and the people deprived of a Qurayshī *imām*.”¹⁹⁹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī asserts that the caliphs, save for a few, were imprisoned: a situation that “continued for [al-Ḥākim] and the caliphs who came after him.” The author argues that during his forty years in office, al-Ḥākim “had no authority (*amr*) or ability to prohibit (*nahy*); rather, his only portion [of the caliphate] is that he was called “Commander of the Faithful.”¹⁹⁹⁶

The caliphal history in the *Khiṭaṭ* also conveys interesting details about Abbasid stewardship of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa, but it is largely a summation of the standard milestones involving the Cairo caliphate contained in the *Sulūk* and other Mamluk sources. In the *Khiṭaṭ*, the history of the Abbasids ends with the usurpation of al-Musta‘īn’s sultanate by al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh and follows through with that sultan and his Circassian successors.¹⁹⁹⁷

In al-Maqrīzī’s encyclopedia of contemporaries, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīda fī tarājim al-a‘yān al-mufīda*, the entry devoted to al-Musta‘īn again reviews all of the Cairo caliphs.¹⁹⁹⁸ The text here resembles the earlier one, save for two digressions. The *Durar* biography includes a longer history of the caliph al-Ḥākim’s earlier adventures in Syria with the Āl Faḍl bedouin, his recognition by Quṭuz, and his competition with the caliph al-Mustanṣir for recognition in Cairo.¹⁹⁹⁹ Al-Maqrīzī also includes more details from the career and later life of al-Musta‘īn that he had omitted or not yet written in the *Khiṭaṭ* version.

On the whole, al-Maqrīzī’s brief history of the Abbasids in Cairo implies that he was interested enough in the caliphs to treat them as a stand-alone dynasty paralleling the Mamluk sultans. His dictionary of contemporaries only includes the Abbasid caliphs of the early fifteenth

politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍarat* de Suyūṭī,” *Annales islamologiques* 7 (1967): 34 note 1; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue: le khalifāt abbaside du Caire,” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 20, no. 77-8 (1972): 15-6.

¹⁹⁹⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:750-88.

¹⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., 3:783. Alternately in the caliphal history recorded in the *Durar al-‘uqūd*, al-Maqrīzī substitutes *al-dunyā* with *al-amṣār* and *al-nās* with *al-muslimūn*. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:207.

¹⁹⁹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:784.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Ibid., 3:786-7.

¹⁹⁹⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *Durar al-‘uqūd*, 2:206-15.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Ibid., 2:207-8.

century, al-Mutawakkil and his son al-Mustaʿīn. It was perhaps to reacquaint readers with the history of the dynasty in Egypt that he included it in the entry on the latter. His biography of al-Mustaʿīn's father, al-Mutawakkil, focuses largely on that caliph's involvement in attempted coups, leading to confinement in the citadel, and subsequent forced relocations from tower to tower.

Covering his own ninth century of the Islamic lunar calendar, al-Maqrīzī adopts the editorial convention among Mamluk chroniclers to mention the caliph presiding over each year. This does not hinder him from reminding readers of the impotence of the Abbasid caliph in Mamluk times. For the year 801/1398-9, the author of the *Sulūk* reiterates:

At the commencement of this ninth century the caliph of the age was the Commander of the Faithful al-Mutawakkil [...] who while garbed in authority, is prohibited from it: his order commanding no influence (*lā nufūdh kalima*) -- rather he shares the status (*manzila*) of one of the notables.²⁰⁰⁰

Ever the hardnosed historian, al-Maqrīzī did not sugar-coat his judgment of the Abbasid caliphate of his own time, thus shaping an attitude that appears to be all his own. His general dislike of Barqūq and the Circassian regime may also have colored his perception of the caliphate as empty pageantry manipulated by the despised government.²⁰⁰¹ Nevertheless, abiding respect for the Banū ʿAbbās as a historical force ensured al-Maqrīzī's continued interest in the family's fortunes in Cairo in spite of himself. Although he harbored little love for the Circassian Mamluk sultans of his day, al-Maqrīzī was a great admirer of the Seljuqs, Fatimids, and some early Mamluk sultans.

One noteworthy passage of the author's eulogy for Baybars in the *Sulūk* suggests the contemporary caliphate as a figurative link between them all:

[Just as the Seljuq sultan] **Rukn al-Dīn** Ṭughril Beg returned the caliphate to the Abbasids after the tumult [brought about by the Buyid commander] al-Basāsīrī, **Rukn al-Dīn** Baybars is the one who returned the caliphate to the Abbasids after that of Hülāgū. [Likewise] in Egypt after the *khuṭba* [was made in the name of] the Fatimid caliph **al-Ḥākim** [it was made for his successor] **al-Zāhir** li-Iʿzāz Dīn Allāh,

²⁰⁰⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:915. Al-Maqrīzī likewise states that al-Mustaʿīn's promotion to sultan did not allow the caliph to accrue any additional influence (*nufūdh*) or power over affairs (*tadbīr al-amūr*). See: *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:203. In his treatise on caliphs and kings who completed the Islamic pilgrimage, al-Maqrīzī observed that the caliph al-Ḥākim "remained without the ability to command or forbid and his order carried no influence (*lā nufūdh kalima*) until his death at al-Kabsh." See: *Dhahab al-masbūk*, 90.

²⁰⁰¹ Levanoni, "Al-Maqrīzī's Account," 95-103. For further insight into al-Maqrīzī's general dislike of Barqūq, see: Sami G. Massoud, "Al-Maqrīzī as a Historian of the Reign of Barqūq," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, No. 2 (2003): 119-36.

while [under the Mamluks] after the name of the Abbasid caliph **al-Ḥākim**, al-Malik **al-Zāhir** Baybars [was mentioned in the *khuṭba*] (emphasis added).²⁰⁰²

In frank terms, al-Maqrīzī interprets the reality of the Abbasid caliphate as modern historians have come to assess it.²⁰⁰³ However, like most authors of historical works during the Mamluk period, he accepted the caliphs as true Abbasids descended from the caliphs of Baghdad. Moreover, his writings do not dispute the idea that the world needed a Qurayshī *imām* lest it go spiritually astray. He also supports the continuity between the Abbasid lines and repeats the traditional acknowledgment of al-Mustansir of Cairo as the thirty-eighth caliph of Banū ‘Abbās. Al-Maqrīzī’s absorption of the long tradition of pro-Abbasid attitudes may have encouraged his recognition of the men of the Cairo line as Abbasids, but not as caliphs or *imāms* in the classical sense²⁰⁰⁴ and certainly not worthy of his veneration.

Nevertheless, even al-Maqrīzī acknowledges that the Abbasid caliphate carried weight on the political stage, particularly when ambassadors came to visit Mamluk territory.²⁰⁰⁵ As a historian he differentiates between the ability to issue orders that are obeyed and the more abstract religious and symbolic authority residually invested in the caliphs of his day.

2. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449)

The highly influential religious scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī was an important thinker of the Burjī Mamluk period.²⁰⁰⁶ Barsbāy promoted him to chief Shāfi‘ī qadi in 827/1423 and he held the position intermittently until his death.²⁰⁰⁷ While modern assessments of his historical output have been somewhat unfavorable, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī was a historian who worked closely with the Mamluk court and frequented scholarly salons.²⁰⁰⁸

In his biographies of the Abbasid caliphs of the eighth Islamic century (fourteenth century C. E.), Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī recorded examples of the Mamluk regime’s desires to encourage the caliphs to pursue academic pastimes as the dynamics of the sultan-caliph relationship defined themselves in Cairo. In his view of al-Ḥākim’s relationship with Baybars, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī notes that the Mamluk sultan sought to limit the caliph’s prestige (*ism*),

²⁰⁰² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:639.

²⁰⁰³ Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 11.

²⁰⁰⁴ Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s Book of Contention and Strife*, 23.

²⁰⁰⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:2:645, 4:2:756.

²⁰⁰⁶ For a recent assessment of his life and works, see: R. Kevin Jaques, *Ibn Hajar: Makers of Islamic Civilization* (I. B. Tauris, 2014).

²⁰⁰⁷ Massoud, *Chronicles*, 54.

²⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

opting instead to cultivate him as a scholar in the Islamic sciences.²⁰⁰⁹ He commends the penmanship of al-Ḥākim's successor al-Mustakfī, whom he also praises as an active and capable participant in the salons of *'ulamā'* and litterateurs.²⁰¹⁰ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī mentions that al-Mustakfī's successor al-Ḥākim II had some prowess as a ḥadīth scholar and was recognized as a skilled transmitter.²⁰¹¹

His biography of al-Mustakfī likewise characterizes the caliph as removed from matters of power, merely brought on campaign to bolster troop morale.²⁰¹² Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī later attributes the breakdown in relations between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the caliph as the result of the latter seeking more religious influence by exerting pressure to force the sultan to attend council sessions of holy law.²⁰¹³

The historical writing of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī also carries a sense of sanctity for the caliphal *bayʿa* as a hallowed Islamic tradition, the gravity of which was not to be disrupted by petty Mamluk politics.²⁰¹⁴ He wrote that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had illegally settled the issue of succession and trespassed against what should have been the sole prerogative of the caliph al-Mustakfī to name his own successor.²⁰¹⁵ In a later discussion of the deposition of al-Mutawakkil in 785/1383, the author writes that the caliph had been deposed and that which had been assigned to him re-assigned to al-Wāthiq II.²⁰¹⁶ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī notes that al-Mutawakkil had a testament from his father, but the Mamluk sultan simply awarded the caliphate to another candidate.²⁰¹⁷ His subsequent coverage of the caliph al-Mutawakkil implies that he was the true caliph and that Barqūq, cowed by impending revolt, restored him under duress.²⁰¹⁸

Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī covered caliphal issues with interest, and for the year 800/1397-8 noted that while the Abbasid caliph and Commander of the Faithful was al-Mutawakkil, his title was disputed by the Zaydī *imām* and various rulers of North Africa and Yemen. In Yemen, Friday

²⁰⁰⁹ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-mīʾa al-thāmina* (Hyderabad, 1972), 1:138.

²⁰¹⁰ Ibid., 2:282.

²⁰¹¹ Ibid., 1:159.

²⁰¹² Ibid., 2:279.

²⁰¹³ Ibid. See also: al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 389; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:474; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr: al-ḥāla al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya fī ʿahdihā bi-wajhin khāṣṣ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1947), 80.

²⁰¹⁴ I explore the symbolic social importance of the *bayʿa* at length in the following chapter.

²⁰¹⁵ Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar al-kāmina* 1:62, 159.

²⁰¹⁶ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr bi-abnāʾ al-ʿumr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969-98), 1:275.

²⁰¹⁷ Ibid., 2:343.

²⁰¹⁸ Ibid., 2:344.

prayers were given in the name of the last caliph of Baghdad, al-Musta‘īm, who had been dead for well over a century.²⁰¹⁹

We can also derive an intriguing image of the contemporary caliphate from poetry attributed to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. In a retrospective view of the doomed caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īm, the caliph is described as thinking he had “a free hand in appointing (*wilāya*) and dismissing, but in reality had only the emblems [of the sultanate] and [mention in] the *khutba*.”²⁰²⁰ Nevertheless, as a poet, Ibn Ḥajar seems to have felt an unbridled optimism at the investiture of the caliph in 808/1406, which he attempted to commemorate through a lengthy *qasīda* that opens with praise of the new caliph.²⁰²¹

Dominion (*mulk*)²⁰²² among us is firm of foundation
through al-Musta‘īm, the just, the Abbasid.

The position of the family of the Prophet’s uncle returned
to its place after prolonged disregard.²⁰²³

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī notes the date of the caliph’s investiture, then, using regnal names of earlier Abbasid caliphs as double entendre (*tawriyya*), comments on widespread rejoicing over the investiture. Using a floral analogy he writes of al-Musta‘īm as a branch growing from the garden of Hāshim with its wonderful foliage.²⁰²⁴ He lauds the great qualities of past leaders, whether powerful caliphs or sultans, and claims that God exalted the religion of Islam after it had been in desolation by fortifying it through noble leaders with the ability to exact vengeance on behalf of the community. He also refers to military leaders capable of decimating their enemies as sublime supports, though it is apparent that for Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, the significance of the caliphate dwarfs that of Mamluk military prowess. After all, it is the caliph’s presence in Cairo that plainly perpetuates Mamluk rule:

Their *imām* through his splendor (*bi-jalālihi*) precedes them,
as “*bismillāh*” takes precedence atop the document (*fī al-qir‘ās*).

If not for the ordering of the state under his direction (*niḡām al-mulk fī tadbīrihi*),

²⁰¹⁹ Ibid., 2:36.

²⁰²⁰ Ibid., 3:445-6.

²⁰²¹ Full version: al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404-6; abridged: Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:823-4. On Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and his craft, see: Thomas Bauer, “Ibn Ḥajar and the Arabic Ghazal of the Mamluk Age,” in *Ghazal as World Literature*, ed. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 1:35-55.

²⁰²² *Al-mulk fī-nā thābit al-āsās bi-al-Musta‘īm al-ādil al-‘Abbās*. There is a slight variation in the first *bayt* preserved by Ibn Iyās: *asbaḥa al-dīn thābit al-āsās bi-l-Musta‘īm al-ādil al-‘Abbās* (*Badā’i’*, 1:2:824).

²⁰²³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 404; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 1:2:824.

²⁰²⁴ Ibid.

the condition (*ḥāl*) of men in the kingdom could not persist.²⁰²⁵

And later:

The hands of kings obey him, in submission
[just as] the fingers of the Nilometer [obey] the Nile of Egypt.

For he is the one who has repelled from us misery,
evil would abound in the world were it not for him.

He has alleviated the all-embracing oppression (*ẓulm*)
of every remaining type and kind.²⁰²⁶

The poetic vision of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī expressed his understanding of the caliph as a supernatural actor with God-given privileges to command the hearts of men as well as the retention of divine influence in matters of climate and ecology. In this context, the “powerlessness” of the caliph may well have been seen positively as he was less inclined to fall prey to the temptations and impurities of actual worldly power. That Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī read untold blessings from the presence of the caliph is clear in the poem which also states that the caliph brought immeasurable favors from God (*na‘māt* or *nī‘māt*). The poem revisits the initial dismay at having lost the caliph in 656/1258 and reminds the reader to cherish the incumbent caliph and never take him for granted. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī speaks of how bad things can become and not to forget all the good that the caliphate brought to Cairo, for it is in the Abbasid caliph that God grants the people a ruler whose days are exalted and prosperous:

None shall seek to disparage the signs of his glory
among men, save for the wicked fool.

The virtues (*manāqib*) of al-‘Abbās have never been united
except in his descendant, king of mankind, ‘Abbās [al-Musta‘īn].

Deny not to al-Musta‘īn leadership
in dominion after the evasion of forgetfulness.²⁰²⁷

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī closes his inaugural *qaṣīda* with a solemn prayer effectively offering fealty to al-Musta‘īn as his liege lord:

My master, your servant (‘*abduka*) has come to you, seeking
acceptance from you, that it not be taken deficiently.

And were it not for awe of you, his praises would be longer,
to where he has brought them in a balance.

²⁰²⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 405.

²⁰²⁶ Ibid.

²⁰²⁷ Ibid., 405-6.

May the God of mankind make your glory endure,
guarded in justice by the God of mankind.

And may you live to hear praises from your servant (*khādim*),
for were it not for you he would endure sorrow.²⁰²⁸

The realities of Mamluk politics that oversaw the swift dismissal of the “caliph-sultan” al-Musta‘īn by al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh did not prevent Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī from continuing, in his chronicle at least, to formally recognize the caliphate of al-Musta‘īn, who became an exile in Alexandria until his death in 833/1430.²⁰²⁹ As chief Shāfi‘ī qadi, however, Ibn Ḥajar also recognized al-Musta‘īn’s successor, al-Mu‘taḍid II and met with him many times officially and at scholarly sessions. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī enjoyed the patronage of the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II and composed an ode thanking him for gifts he received on the caliph’s departure for Āmid to campaign against the Aq Qoyunlu with Barsbāy in 836/1433:

O master who gained lordship over the people of the world (*banī al-dunyā*),
for they are under his war banner, generous and enduring.

You bestowed on me largesse and my thanks are insufficient
So if you seek my thanks, [know] they are inadequate.

You resemble ‘Abbās who summoned the rain in time of draught--
as the abundant rain obeyed him when all seemed lost.

[True] generosity ended with Abī al-Faḍl [al-‘Abbās], but among
his offspring it remains; ask and you will find.

None succeeded in the generosity of his ancestor--
save for the Commander of the Faithful al-Mu‘taḍid!²⁰³⁰

In no uncertain terms, the poem uses strong imagery to link al-Mu‘taḍid II to his ancestor al-‘Abbās, alluding to the year 17/638 in which a major draught threatened the Ḥijāz during the reign of the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644).²⁰³¹ Precedent for the Muslim *tawassul* prayers for rain began with the Prophet’s request of God to send rain. Scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī, and Ibn Iyās drew attention to the story’s cultural bearing and the role it had

²⁰²⁸ Ibid., 406.

²⁰²⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:344.

²⁰³⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:215; idem, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ‘alā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*, ed. Ḥasan Ismā‘īl Marwa (Beirut, 1992), 1:634; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām*, 2:581.

²⁰³¹ Al-Suyūṭī provides the context of this event: “[For its drought,] the year [16/637-8] was named the “Year of Cinders” (*‘ām al-ramāda*) and ‘Umar prayed for rain with [the help of] al-‘Abbās. [...] When ‘Umar went to pray for rain, he wore the cloak of the Prophet [and took] the hand of al-‘Abbās, raised it aloft and said “O God, we seek a means to you (*natawasul ilayk*) through the uncle of your prophet to ask that you relieve us from the drought and water us with rain.” See: *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 104.

on casting the contemporary Abbasid caliphs as descendants of a holy man obeyed by the elements. Extra magnitude attributed to prayers made by the caliph as a descendant of al-‘Abbās brought more integration of the caliphate into Cairene life at public gatherings for prayer to alleviate plague, bring rain, or increase the Nile inundation in years of drought, all of which were important manifestations of the Abbasid caliphate before the public in Mamluk society.

But could it be that there was a residual element of pagan thinking too, as well as poetic hyperbole? We have the notion that al-Mu‘taḍid, like all other Abbasid caliphs, was the *true* heir of the Prophet’s uncle al-‘Abbās who, according to tradition, “brought the rain in a time of draught.” This appears to be an ascription of supernatural powers to the caliph, who by his ancestry alone was said to be a lightning rod for *baraka* or favor with God to the extent that even the rain obeyed him. We know that this concept of the caliph as rain-bringer was important to the Mamluks, who periodically made use of the caliph by asking him to pray for rain or sufficient levels at the well of the Nilometer.

It is of little surprise that Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, a man who so loved the Abbasids of his own time, was attended in his funeral bier by the brother and successor of al-Mu‘taḍid, al-Mustakfī II, a notable participant amongst the estimated 50,000 attendees at the funeral for a notable Cairene scholar eulogized as the “*amīr al-mu‘minīn fī al-ḥadīth*” in 852/1448.²⁰³²

3. Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1451)

The Mamluks appointed the Turkish historian, *faqīh*, and court functionary, Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī, both as inspector of pious foundations and *muḥtasib* at the expense of his bitter rival al-Maqrīzī. No doubt pleased to receive more favor from the Mamluk sultans, al-‘Aynī’s *Iqd al-jumān fī ta’rīkh ahl al-zamān* casts his patrons in a positive light. Many of the important investitures and events concerning the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo are mentioned, but without much comment on the caliph’s position. Each annal commences with a lengthy list of rulers and functionaries. In al-‘Aynī’s notation of the caliphal office during 662-4/1263-6 (years immediately after the investiture of al-Ḥākim), the historian remarks simply that the “caliph is al-Ḥākim, and he is established in Cairo (*muqīm bi-al-Qāhira*)”²⁰³³ though later, he shares al-

²⁰³² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:532-3; idem, *Manhal*, 2:22. Before his death, Ibn Ḥajar had been one of the qadis on hand to officiate at the caliph’s *bay‘a* ceremony. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 2:230. See also: Anne F. Broadbridge, “Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-‘Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 106.

²⁰³³ Al-‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 1:374, 395.

Maqrīzī's judgment that the same caliph "[was] not referred to (*ghayr marjūa' ilayhi*), and had no ability to command or forbid (*al-amr wa-al-nahy*); rather he [only] has the title of caliph."²⁰³⁴

Like the regnal histories of Baybars and Qalāwūn by Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, al-'Aynī composed flattering works of royal biography for his own masters, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (*al-Sayf al-muhannad fī ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad*), al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar (*al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar*) and al-Ashraf Barsbāy.

Al-'Aynī praised al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar and tied eschatological significance to him.²⁰³⁵ In his *Rawḍ*, devoted to Ṭaṭar, the author discusses the term "sultan" which he claims was first used by Saladin, and as the central authority of the caliphate weakened, the title grew in popularity among the kings.²⁰³⁶ For al-'Aynī, kings or Mamluk sultans such as Ṭaṭar, were expected to "walk the path of the Rāshidūn caliphs" especially in almsgiving.²⁰³⁷ Syria was not without significance for the historian, himself having been raised in Aleppo and Antioch. Ṭaṭar likewise spent much of his early career in Syria and first announced his sultanate there in 824/1421. Al-'Aynī links this to the origins of Sunni caliphate based in Syria during Umayyad and Abbasid times, until the latter dynasty lost control to the Fatimids under whom "great evil arose."²⁰³⁸

4. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505)

Although the scholarly interests of al-Suyūfī cover an array of subjects related to the sciences and humanities, he wrote at great length about history and Islamic governance. Some authors have described his worldview as consistently representing a Sunni piety at odds with Mamluk usurpation of classical caliphal rights.²⁰³⁹

In the writing of al-Suyūfī we discover an unabashed loyalist to the Abbasids and defender of their prerogatives stemming, perhaps, from the author's familial proximity to the men of the latter day Cairo caliphate.²⁰⁴⁰ As we have seen in the second chapter of the current

²⁰³⁴ Ibid., 1:418.

²⁰³⁵ Irwin, "Mamluk History and Historians," 168. See also: P. M. Holt, "Literary Offerings: A Genre of Courtly Literature," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10-2.

²⁰³⁶ Al-'Aynī, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīra al-Malik al-Zāhir "Ṭaṭar"* (Cairo, 1962), 16. See: J. H. Kramers and C. E. Bosworth, "Sultān," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 9:849-54; V. V. Barthold, "Caliph and Sultan," tr. N. S. Doniach in *The Islamic Quarterly* 7, no. 1-2 (1963): 127-31.

²⁰³⁷ Al-'Aynī, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir*, 33.

²⁰³⁸ Ibid., 39.

²⁰³⁹ Garcin, "Histoire," 33-88; Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 148.

²⁰⁴⁰ The career of al-Suyūfī benefitted through his association with the Abbasid family. He received more than once office on the recommendation of the caliph. Waxing nostalgic on al-Mustakfi II in whose household he had been raised, he writes: "I do not think there will be found on the face of the earth a

dissertation, al-Suyūṭī's fondness for the Abbasid caliphs was concomitant with the court favor and political appointments that Abbasid patronage provided to his family.

Few of his contemporaries approach al-Suyūṭī's partiality to the Abbasid caliphate. At the behest of the caliph al-Mutawakkil II, he compiled two works on Abbasid virtues and obscure family members; *al-Asās fī faḍl Banī al-'Abbās* and *Raf' al-bās 'an Banī al-'Abbās*.²⁰⁴¹ But two other works, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* and *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, showcase a unique image of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk politics and society. In the latter, a chronologically arranged history of every caliphal successor since the death of the Prophet, the author deals with the lacunae permeating the narrative history of the Cairo Abbasids (many of whom had uneventful reigns) by including documents and notable events such as battles or natural disasters that occurred during a caliph's time in office. The *Ḥusn*, on the other hand, was a localized history of Egypt that drew attention to the relationship of its rulers with the caliphate. For al-Suyūṭī it was clear that in the years since Baybars resurrected the Abbasid caliphate, Egypt had undergone a profound cultural efflorescence and emerged as a devoutly Islamic capital.²⁰⁴² A passage of the *Ḥusn* closely resembles the earlier observations attributed to Abū Shāma after the investiture of al-Mustanṣir:

Know that Egypt, since the time it became seat of the caliphate, aggrandized its affair and increased the rituals of Islam practiced within it. It raised the *sunna* and erased innovation, and has been a place of residence for the '*ulamā'*' and a wayfaring stop for virtuous scholars (*maḥaṭṭu riḥāl al-fuḍalā'*); and this is one of the divine mysteries of God; that wherever He deposits the prophetic caliphate, belief (*īmān*) accompanies it [...] Belief and knowledge (*ilm*) both accompany the caliphate, wherever it is [...] Think not that this can be attributed to the kings (i.e., the Mamluk sultans), for the Ayyubids were superior in standing (*qadr*) and greater in significance (*khaṭr*) than their numerous successors. Nevertheless, Egypt in their time was unlike Baghdad. In the present regions of the earth, among kings, there are those who are steadfast in fortitude and militarily superior to the kings of Egypt [...] yet religion (*dīn*) is not established in their lands as it is in Egypt. The rituals of Islam do not appear manifest in their regions as they do in Egypt.²⁰⁴³

Al-Suyūṭī's narrative presentation also stresses the presence of the caliph as a perpetuation of order in both the material and spiritual worlds. It is thus that al-Suyūṭī's conception of caliphal history recalls Shakespearean dramas such as *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, in that discord in the political world frequently disrupts the natural world. Divine

caliph, after the descendants of 'Umar II, more virtuous than this caliph." See: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 410. On al-Suyūṭī's justification and defense of Abbasid prerogatives, see: *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 11-4.

²⁰⁴¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:92. See: *Raf' al-bās 'an Banī al-'Abbās*, (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2011).

²⁰⁴² Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Aẓīm Khulī, *al-'Ulamā' fī Miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M. (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 2014), 71-2.

²⁰⁴³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:94.

punishment is meted out to historical actors who offend Islam and the prophetic legacy by harming their appointed representative, the Abbasid caliph. Al-Suyūṭī's opinion of a given sultan correlates directly with their conduct towards the holders of the caliphate.²⁰⁴⁴

In the Mamluk period, al-Suyūṭī portrayed Baybars heroically and bestowed appreciation for that sultan's great act of restoring the caliphate.²⁰⁴⁵ Unlike Baybars, the sultan Qalāwūn, guilty in the writer's mind of ignoring and suppressing the caliphate for the majority of his sultanate, is quickly brushed aside with scarcely a mention, though he was an influential figure in Mamluk culture and society well after he died.²⁰⁴⁶ Instead, the death of Qalāwūn ushered in the more propitious reign of his son al-Ashraf Khalīl, who "made manifest the authority of the caliph which had languished in the days of his father, to the point that his father had not even requested a document of investiture for his rule from [the caliph]." ²⁰⁴⁷

The interpretation turns caustic on that sultan's younger brother, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who banished the caliph al-Mustakfī to Qūṣ in 737/1337.²⁰⁴⁸ Al-Suyūṭī attacks al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as an illegitimate sultan who sidelined the caliphate and worse still, ignored the recognized heir of the caliph who had received validation from the 'ulamā' of Upper Egypt.²⁰⁴⁹ Never one to shrink from offering moral pronouncements in his history, the author judged that the failure of a worthy king to arise from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's descendants was an explicit rebuke for his betrayal of the caliphate.²⁰⁵⁰ The offspring of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad likewise did not escape harsh words:

The sultan al-Manṣūr [Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn] was deposed in the same year of his investiture (753/1352) due to his corruption and wine-drinking to the extent that he was even said to have coupled with his father's widows. He was banished to Qūṣ and there assassinated. That was retribution from God for what his father [al-Nāṣir Muḥammad] had done with the caliph [al-Mustakfī]. This is the way

²⁰⁴⁴ For coverage of this correlation in al-Suyūṭī's writing as it concerned earlier Islamic dynasties see: Garcin, "Histoire," 40-53.

²⁰⁴⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:52-61, 95-7; Garcin, "Histoire," 47.

²⁰⁴⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 385; Garcin, "Histoire," 55. For a discussion of nostalgia for the Mamluk sultans during Ottoman rule, see: Jane Hathaway, "Mamluk "Revivals" and Mamluk Nostalgia in Ottoman Egypt," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 387-406.

²⁰⁴⁷ Ibid. In the *Ḥusn*, however, al-Suyūṭī does acknowledge that Qalāwūn received delegation from the caliph and includes a copy of his investiture document: *Ḥusn*, 2:106-10. At the very least, a document exists whether Qalāwūn requested it or not, see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:116-20.

²⁰⁴⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 389; idem, *Ḥusn*, 2:67-8.

²⁰⁴⁹ Garcin, "Histoire," 57. Al-Suyūṭī judged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad illegitimate after forcing out Baybars al-Jāshinkīr who had the support of the caliph.

²⁰⁵⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:68. In his motifs of divine punishment meted out for interfering with the Abbasid caliphate, al-Suyūṭī channels earlier sentiments expressed by al-Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*, 2:3:570), Ibn Hajar (*Durar al-kāmina*, 2:280), and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (*Ta'rīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. 'Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1994), 2:206).

in which God deals with those who harmfully interfere with members of the Abbasid family.²⁰⁵¹

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's alleged selection of the Abbasid prince Ibrāhīm al-Wāthiq instead of the legally designated successor Aḥmad al-Ḥākim II is a particular point of interest for al-Suyūṭī, who accepts and transmits the harsh assessment by the head of the chancery at the time, Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī.²⁰⁵² Al-Wāthiq, portrayed as a notorious gambler and reprobate, is judged to have acted so disgracefully that even his descendants were similarly polluted, making the caliphate of anyone outside the direct line of al-Mustakfī a dangerous error.²⁰⁵³ Most other historians, however, perhaps unaware of al-ʿUmarī's report, seem to have expressed less outrage toward al-Wāthiq's branch, which often played a useful role for the Mamluk sultans by providing a source for alternative caliphs.²⁰⁵⁴

Further confirmation that al-Suyūṭī favored the line of al-Ḥākim and al-Mustakfī against all others can be traced to his mention of the first caliph al-Mustanṣir billāh who "was put in office but did not actually assume the caliphate (*fa-lam yuqim fī al-khilāfa*), for he received *bayʿa* in Egypt, and went to Iraq to meet the Mongols and was killed, leaving the caliphate interrupted for one year in his wake, until it was established in Egypt, the first of [the caliphs being] al-Ḥākim."²⁰⁵⁵ This implies that recognition and pledge for the caliph in Egypt alone was not enough to be considered a caliph. However, al-Suyūṭī seems predisposed toward defending the line of al-Ḥākim and the caliphs of that line, which he appeared to regard as uniquely legitimate.

Vision of the Caliphate

The histories of al-Suyūṭī exude the indignation of a staunch traditionalist who frequently bristled at what he perceived as the insults of the Mamluk regime aimed at the contemporary caliphs, as well as their wrongfully diminished station in society.²⁰⁵⁶ In his own time, al-Suyūṭī points out that the sultan married a daughter of the caliph to one of his amirs, implying that the Mamluk sultan snubbed the caliph by not marrying the Abbasid princess himself.²⁰⁵⁷

²⁰⁵¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 399. See also: Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:2:489.

²⁰⁵² Al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 391.

²⁰⁵³ Garcin, "Histoire," 57.

²⁰⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 16. Other authors, while acknowledging the investiture and brief caliphate of al-Mustanṣir, echo al-Suyūṭī's sentiment that al-Ḥākim was the "first Abbasid caliph of Cairo." See: Ibn Taghribirdī, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa*, 1:240; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 1:234; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1:1:321. Al-Sakhāwī likewise numbered al-Ḥākim II the *third* caliph of Egypt, perhaps forgetting or omitting al-Mustanṣir (or possibly al-Wāthiq) from the chain. See: *Wajīz al-kalām*, 1:5.

²⁰⁵⁶ See al-Suyūṭī's brief discussion of the differences between the classical caliphate, *mulk*, and sultanate: *Ḥusn*, 2:125.

²⁰⁵⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 335-6.

Elsewhere the author observed that the caliph sometimes appeared “as if he were merely an amir in the sultan’s service,”²⁰⁵⁸ and it was perhaps not without a hint of antipathy that he composed a brief description of the caliph’s monthly visits to the Mamluk sultan:

Affairs have arrived at such a state in our own age that the caliph comes to the sultan to congratulate him at the start of each month, and the most that the sultan grants to the caliph of his right is to descend from his dais (*martabatihī*) and the two then sit together beyond it. Finally the caliph stands and departs as if he were merely one of the people (*al-nās*), and the sultan sits once more atop the throne of his kingdom (*fi dasti mamlakatihī*).²⁰⁵⁹

It is a point of interest that in his own study of the historical caliphate, al-Suyūṭī did not consider the Abbasid caliphs of his own time to be the nadir of the caliphate. Rather, he understood that the caliphs of Cairo had some degree of authority, and were not comparable to the piteous state of relations between the Abbasid caliph al-Ṭā’i’ (363-81/974-91) and the Buyid ‘Aḍud al-Dawla (367-72/977-83) during which, according to the author, the caliphate sank to its lowest point while the proto-sultanate was at its apex.²⁰⁶⁰

It remains difficult to speak of the author’s aspirations for the caliphate beyond general terms, though some clues emerge from his historical works and the writings of his students. At the outset, it seems clear that the Abbasid caliphate, as traditional guarantor of the *sharī‘a*, must underwrite the legitimacy of government. For al-Suyūṭī, sultans were only as good as their treatment of the Commander of the Faithful.²⁰⁶¹

Al-Suyūṭī’s failed plan of 902/1496 to advance the political power of his ally al-Mutawakkil II and get himself named executive qadī (*qāḍī kabīr*) offers more insight into the author’s conception of the contemporary caliphate. Aware as he was of the limitations that the Mamluks and their ‘*ulamā*’ had placed on the caliphate, al-Suyūṭī nevertheless cited historical example and, according to Ibn Iyās, wished to be named as the *qāḍī kabīr* on the precedent that previous caliphs had appointed meritorious men as they saw fit.²⁰⁶²

In this episode, al-Suyūṭī did not seem to be seeking more political power for the caliph other than to name delegates. While this posed no immediate threat to the Mamluk ruling elite, it frightened the ‘*ulamā*’, particularly the four chief qadis who viewed it as an existential threat to their own positions. This meant trouble for the ruling Mamluk junta whose *actual* authority over

²⁰⁵⁸ Ibid., 327.

²⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁰⁶¹ Garcin, “Histoire,” 55.

²⁰⁶² Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 3:339; ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-‘ābidīn bi-tarjamat Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Aṣr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Damascus, 1998), 172-4.

the land derived more from the *'ulamā'* than the caliph; if the *'ulamā'* were unhappy with the rulers for some reason, the sultan and his men would have the choice of either appeasing them or potentially facing their castigation in the mosques.

As Garcin puts it, al-Suyūṭī may have wished to “restore the natural order,”²⁰⁶³ as he longed to see at least some power restored to the caliphate, certainly more than it had enjoyed in previous years under the Mamluks. He also was an opponent of the system of four chief qadiships, wishing instead to gather their authority in the hands of one man, whether himself or the Abbasid caliph aided by a learned advisor.²⁰⁶⁴ It was not just a matter of al-Suyūṭī playing for a high position; his suggestion was based on the Ayyubid precedent that Tāj al-Dīn ibn Bint al-A‘azz appointed and dismissed all the magistrates of the empire.²⁰⁶⁵ Moreover, past history clearly demonstrated that a caliph also had the right to appoint whom he saw fit to office. Baybars’s decision to create four chief qadiships in the 660s/1260s had no history behind it, though it facilitated the efforts of Mamluk sultans to control the religious establishment by divide and rule.²⁰⁶⁶ Al-Suyūṭī himself had no qualms about offering himself for this new supreme qadiship, perhaps considering it fulfillment of an obligatory deed, which if performed by one or some, is removed from the rest of the *umma* (*farḍ kifāya*). If he were the only scholar who could exercise the level of *ijtihād* required for the new office, then he was obliged to propose himself for it, perhaps in accordance with the Prophetic tradition which states, “Whoever is asked about knowledge and hides it shall be given a bridle of fire on the Day of Judgment.”²⁰⁶⁷

Al-Suyūṭī appears to have disapproved of the caliph as a powerless figurehead, though paradoxically he may have been wary of a caliphate with too much power. If, in fact, the caliph received advice, selected fatwas and potentially engaged with military policy, it is difficult to envisage where such an arrangement might have left the Mamluk sultan. Such an image of the

²⁰⁶³ Garcin, “Histoire,” 66.

²⁰⁶⁴ Garcin, “Histoire,” 64; Nūr al-Dīn Zengī had four chief judges in Syria during his reign and in Cairo the Fatimids had four chief judges: two Shī‘ī judges (a Twelver and an Ismā‘īlī) and two Sunni (a Shāfi‘ī and Mālikī). It was not until the Ayyubids came to power that the system changed into one with a single Shāfi‘ī qadi before Baybars famously established four chief Sunni qadiships in 663/1265. See: Joseph H. Escovitz, *The Office of Qādī al-Quḍāt in Cairo under the Bahrī Mamlūks* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984), 20-8; idem, “The Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in the Mamlūk Empire,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 (1982): 529-31; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 23; idem, “Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars and the Appointment of Four Chief Qādīs (663/1265),” *Studia Islamica* 60 (1984): 167-76.

²⁰⁶⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 384; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3:339. See also: Sherman A. Jackson, “The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-A‘azz and the Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamlūk Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 115, no. 1 (1995): 61-5.

²⁰⁶⁶ Saïd A. Arjomand, “Legitimacy and Political Organisation: Caliphs, Kings and Regimes,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 252; Garcin, “Histoire,” 64-5.

²⁰⁶⁷ Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fī uṣūl al-tafsīr*, ed. ‘Adnān Zarzūr (Kuwait, 1971), 114-5.

caliphate was likely focused on the religious sphere, seeking to maintain the caliph as the symbolic heart of Islam albeit with the power of selecting religious policies and making appointments in the world of the *'ulamā'*, through informed counsel (*shūra*).

For their part, the caliphs of the later fifteenth century had not sought out a larger role.²⁰⁶⁸ Even if they had been interested in more power, they were seldom presented with the opportunity to seize it and had no practical means of maintaining it.

Al-Suyūṭī's image of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo

In the introduction to the *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, al-Suyūṭī refers to all of the caliphs down to his own time, as men who “stood in authority over the *umma*.”²⁰⁶⁹ The notion is at the very least his argument for symbolic continuity between the Rāshidūn caliphs and the Abbasids of Cairo. His writing presupposes an enduring Abbasid legitimacy among the *'ulamā'*. While he may have been using proximity to the caliphate to bolster his own importance, his point of view is evidence that the Abbasids maintained substantial prominence in Egypt throughout the fifteenth century down to the final decades of the Mamluk sultanate. Al-Suyūṭī believed not only in the legitimizing force of the Abbasid family for a regime of former slave-soldiers and usurpers, but viewed it as the caliph's privilege to recognize whomever he wished.

In his historical works, al-Suyūṭī forces a distinction between caliphs and sultans and his choice of composing Islamic history in the medium of a caliphal history speaks to his understanding that the caliph was central to the organization and efficiency of the natural world and that history incessantly occurred within the reign of the caliph of the age. For that reason, whereas other *'ulamā'* historians recognized the demoted status of the caliphate for what it was, al-Suyūṭī insisted on the continuity between the current line of Abbasids at Cairo and the great caliphs of history who wielded incomparable power. He bemoaned the realities of their weakened position but saw no difference in their symbolic stature compared with iconic caliphs such as 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān or Hārūn al-Rashīd.

F. Views outside the Mamluk Sultanate

European Merchants and Travelers

Although some visiting medieval orientalist sketch-artists and European painters failed to include the caliphs of Cairo in their scene depictions of Mamluk courtly life,²⁰⁷⁰ other merchants

²⁰⁶⁸ Garcin, “Histoire,” 62-3.

²⁰⁶⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 3.

²⁰⁷⁰ L. A. Mayer, “Some Remarks on the Dress of the Abbasid Caliphs in Egypt,” *Islamic Culture* 17, no. 1 (1943): 36, idem, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 12. Mayer concludes that the

and pilgrims who arrived during the early Burjī period identified the caliph's importance at court which they duly documented in observations of Egyptian society.

1. The Florentine Pilgrims of 1384

Two years into the reign of Barqūq, a group of thirteen Tuscan pilgrims set out for the holy sites of the Levant and began their journey in Mamluk territory. Three members of the party, the Florentines Leonardo di Frescobaldi, Giorgio Gucci, and Simone Sigoli wrote independent accounts of their travels in the cities of Egypt and Greater Syria.

Both Frescobaldi and Sigoli discuss the likely "Greek" Christian origins of Barqūq whom they viewed as an apostate who ascended the ranks of "admirals" (amirs) to become the sultan.²⁰⁷¹ According to Frescobaldi, it was only after Barqūq reached the ascendancy and reorganized the environs of Egypt that he "called the Caliph, the Pope as you would say, and wished to be confirmed: the Caliph said he could not since their law had it that he who is Sultan should be a Saracen and the son of a Saracen and that his father was a Christian. At once he had [the caliph] taken and put in prison, and he appointed another [caliph], and by that he was confirmed."²⁰⁷² Likewise in Sigoli's account, the author speaks briefly on his understanding of caliphal legitimization in the Mamluk realm:

Now, before one is confirmed Sultan, he should have the approval of their Caliph, that is, their pope after our fashion. Now the Caliph would never agree to give the approval, because the seigniorship should not fall to him. So he who is now Sultan quickly had the Caliph arrested and cast into prison, and then chose one at will. Having done this, he called his council, and finally in one night he began to send for many citizens, who were great and powerful, and were capable of being able to do harm to his seigniorship.²⁰⁷³

Few Mamluk sources mention the rumors that al-Mutawakkil had been initially reluctant to invest Barqūq, though most mention the caliph's imprisonment after the alleged coup attempt of 785/1383. Several European visitors on the other hand covered both items as a single event, perhaps after conflating contemporary gossip that circulated about Barqūq. Visitors heard stories

caliphs were simply too highly placed by the Mamluks and were probably not accessible or visible to visiting artists.

²⁰⁷¹ Leonardo di Frescobaldi, "Pilgrimage of Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi to the Holy Land" in Theophilus Bellorini, Eugene Hoade, and Bellarmino Bagatti, trans., *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 6 (Jerusalem, 1948), 45; Simone Sigoli, "Pilgrimage of Simone Sigoli to the Holy Land" in *Ibid.*, 174-5. See also: Ulrich Haarmann, "The Mamluk System of Rule in the Eyes of Western Travelers," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 110.

²⁰⁷² Frescobaldi, *Pilgrimage*, 45-6.

²⁰⁷³ Sigoli, *Pilgrimage*, 171. See also: Haarmann, "Mamluk System of Rule," 23-4.

that the caliph rejected Barqūq on alternating grounds that his ancestors had not been Muslim, that he was not a member of the previous ruling house, or that the caliph had misgivings concerning Barqūq's true ambitions.

European writers recognized the importance of the caliphate in making the rule of the sultan palpable to both the Mamluk establishment and their population. They asserted that no one could seize power without the blessing of the caliph, which may have resembled the way western rulers needed approval from the pope. Understanding the Abbasid caliph as the "pope of the pagans" was a common trope in pre-modern Christian literature down to the early twentieth century.²⁰⁷⁴ The travelers were interested in approaching Mamluk society by seeking correlations between what they encountered in Egypt with what they knew at home. Thus amirs became admirals (the term itself most likely a corruption of *amīr al-baḥr*), qadis became bishops,²⁰⁷⁵ and the twelve districts of Cairo became wards or quarters akin to those of Florence.²⁰⁷⁶

Unless they were direct participants at the court of the Mamluk sultan, much of the information was reported secondarily to the European pilgrims and merchant travelers. Although their accounts did not describe the reality of the caliphs' situation, we may suggest that the importance of the caliphate was nevertheless expressed to them in terms which encouraged a comparison of the caliph to the pope. It is thus that such descriptions from non-Muslim and non-Mamluk travelers function as windows into the contemporary view of the caliphate. Modern scholars have been astute in pointing out the most obvious proposition that these travelers fundamentally misread the reality of a largely powerless caliph at the mercy of the Mamluk sultan,²⁰⁷⁷ but we can also observe that the Abbasid caliphate had a significance and prestige that even foreign visitors to the Mamluk realm could appreciate.

2. Bertrando de Mignanelli (d. 1455)

The Italian traveler and merchant Bertrando de Mignanelli wrote a Latin biography of Barqūq titled *Ascensus Barcoch* in 1416. After leaving Italy, he ultimately enjoyed a prosperous life as a trader in Mamluk Damascus for many years, growing fluent in Arabic and later working as translator between the Mamluk sultan and the ambassador of Milan. During a brief sojourn in

²⁰⁷⁴ Bertrando de Mignanelli, trans. Walter J. Fischel in "*Ascensus Barcoch*: a Latin Biography of the Mamlūk Sultan Barqūq of Egypt (d. 1399) Written by B. de Mignanelli," *Arabica* 6 (1959): 159. Even the great Florentine political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (d. 1527), a contemporary of the Circassian Mamluks, was apparently interested in Egyptian affairs and saw similarities between the election of the sultan and that of the pope. See: *The Prince*, (tr. and ed.) Robert M. Adams (New York: Norton, 1992), 56. For comparisons between pope and caliph, see: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 9-18.

²⁰⁷⁵ Frescobaldi, *Pilgrimage*, 46; Silogi, *Pilgrimage*, 171.

²⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁰⁷⁷ Haarmann, "Mamluk System of Rule," 24.

Constance, Germany in 1416, friends urged De Mignanelli to recount his observations in two treatises, *Ascensus Barcoch* on the life of the sultan and *Vita Tamerlani* or *Ruina Damasci* on Temür's sack of Damascus that the author, who in 1400 had wintered in Jerusalem, had escaped by chance.²⁰⁷⁸

Little information about De Mignanelli survived beyond his own writing, and he provides a true outsider's perspective to events at the court of Barqūq. Many of the proceedings covered in his biography of Barqūq occurred before arriving at the Mamluk sultanate and it is difficult to determine his sources.²⁰⁷⁹

Like the Syrian chronicler Muḥammad ibn Ṣaṣra and the Florentine pilgrims, De Mignanelli provides an image of difficult relations between Barqūq and the caliph al-Mutawakkil from the time of the sultan's investiture until his return to power after his ouster in 791-2/1389. Thus, the caliph appears as a staunch opponent of Barqūq, who raises numerous objections to his rule.²⁰⁸⁰ Also like the pilgrims, De Mignanelli's account melds the sultan's investiture with the alleged 785/1383 plot to remove the sultan that saw al-Mutawakkil charged as a chief conspirator then quickly replaced by an ambitious relative.²⁰⁸¹

De Mignanelli believed Barqūq to be largely unpopular for his failure to secure the support of "the true ranking caliph because he was a higher priest." For the author, Barqūq's illegitimacy in the eyes of the caliph (who actively battled against him) thus emboldened rivals such as Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and Minṭāsh, as well as other plotters.²⁰⁸²

After Barqūq had scattered Minṭāsh's forces, he captured al-Mutawakkil, and according to most Mamluk sources, promptly renewed the caliphal *bay'a*, after which he returned to Cairo and lived harmoniously and in good faith with the caliph until his death.²⁰⁸³ Nevertheless, the account of De Mignanelli shares an image of hostility between Barqūq and al-Mutawakkil, far more sensational than anything found in the works of many indigenous historians of the Mamluk territories:

²⁰⁷⁸ Bertrando de Mignanelli, "*Ascensus Barcoch*," 4-5. See also: Walter Fischel, "A New Latin Source on Tamerlane's Conquest of Damascus (1400/1401)(B. de Mignanelli's 'Vita Tamerlani' (1416)," *Oriens* 9 (1956): 201-32; Haarmann, "Mamluk System of Rule," 9, 23.

²⁰⁷⁹ Bertrando de Mignanelli, "*Ascensus Barcoch*," 6.

²⁰⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁰⁸¹ Ibid., 18. According to most Mamluk sources, it was at that point (rather than the investiture) that Barqūq raised a sword and threatened to behead the caliph. De Mignanelli claims that the caliph's grandson ruled for 7 years as al-Wāthiq. Al-Wāthiq's relationship to al-Mutawakkil is confused at best among the sources: Ibn Khaldūn named him generally as a relative, while Ibn Taghrībirdī called him a nephew.

²⁰⁸² Ibid., 19, 23-4.

²⁰⁸³ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, 2:345; idem, *Dhayl Durar al-kāmina*, 119.

Whomever [Barqūq] found in his way he put to the sword, and he hurried on to the big tent. He wounded the Caliph in the head [...] The Caliph, after he was wounded, called out loudly, “Now, indeed, Barqūq, you are worthy to rule, because you are victorious over [the interim Qalawunid sultan Ḥājī] in battle.”²⁰⁸⁴ Such things and more he said, not because of Barqūq as much as because of the wound in his head, which was red with blood and wrapped in cloth, like the head of a goldfinch. The Caliph and the Sultan with their leading men were taken prisoners. Barqūq’s flag was raised aloft and fluttered above the great tent.²⁰⁸⁵

In regard to Barqūq’s second affirmation as sultan, De Mignanelli observed that the Mamluk sultan “was confirmed by the Caliph who is their pope, but is not held in such great reverence as we hold our pope.”²⁰⁸⁶ On their way back to Cairo, important notables came to meet Barqūq amid great pomp; the mood infectious, the traveler remarks that even the caliph who had so bitterly opposed Barqūq, joined the people in exclaiming “long live Barqūq!” in an atmosphere of amnesty and jubilation.²⁰⁸⁷

3. Emmanuelle Piloti (ca. 1371-1438?)

Hailing from the island of Crete during its time as a Venetian possession, the merchant and commercial entrepreneur Emmanuelle Piloti (b. 1371) spent several non-consecutive decades in Mamluk territory from roughly 1396 to 1438, alternately at the end of the reign of Barqūq (1382-99), the reign of his son Faraj (1399-1412), and later during the rule of Barsbāy (1422-38).²⁰⁸⁸

In his initial observations of the heterogeneous Egyptian population, Piloti writes of the inhabitants of Cairo, “Rome of the pagans,” stating that it is from among the ranks of a vastly

²⁰⁸⁴ The old Turkish custom in which “he who kills the king becomes the ruler” found frequent expression in the Mamluk period. When conspirators killed Qūṭuz, chroniclers and other commentators observed that Baybars became sultan because he had participated in the deed. See: Ulrich Haarmann, “Regicide and the ‘Law of the Turks,’” in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City, 1990), 127-35; Daniel Beaumont, “Political Violence and Ideology in Mamluk Society,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 218; Albrecht Fuess, “Between *dihlīz* and *dār al-‘adl*: Forms of Outdoor and Indoor Royal Representation at the Mamluk Court in Egypt,” in *Court Cultures in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Albrecht Fuess and Jan-Peter Hartung (London: Routledge, 2011), 149.

²⁰⁸⁵ Bertrando de Mignanelli, “*Ascensus Barcoch*,” 25. Although most Mamluk sources recognize that Barqūq had wanted to beat or behead al-Mutawakkil in 785/1383, some later allege that in 791-2/1389, the sultan was kind to the caliph and Ḥājī after re-capturing them. See: Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:345; idem, *Dhayl Durar al-kāmina*, 119; Ibn Ṣaṣrā/Brinner, *al-Durra al-muḍī’a*, 1:75-6 (English), 2:50-1 (Arabic).

²⁰⁸⁶ Bertrando de Mignanelli, “*Ascensus Barcoch*,” 26.

²⁰⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸⁸ Emmanuel Piloti, *L’Égypte au commencement du quinzième siècle d’après le traité d’Emmanuel Piloti de Crète, incipit 1420*, ed. P. Dopp (Cairo, 1950), xi-xii. See also: Haarmann, “Mamluk System of Rule,” 10; Norman Housley, “Emmanuelle Piloti and Crusading in the Latin East,” in *The Hospitallers, the Mediterranean, and Europe: Festschrift for Anthony Luttrell*, ed. Karl Borchardt et al., (Ashgate, Hampshire: Burlington, 2007), 139-43.

innumerable Egyptian population that “their caliph and pope is made.”²⁰⁸⁹ It is clearly a visitor’s misunderstanding that the caliph would be elected from mundane Cairenes rather than the Abbasid family living in confinement, but one wonders about the source of the misconception. Perhaps his informants were other Egyptian merchants who saw the caliphs as descendants of a great Arab aristocracy more closely resembling their own culture than that of the “foreign” Mamluks. The understanding that the caliph came from Egyptian stock is set against a third class of inhabitants of Cairo, the “slaves brought from every Christian nation, of whom are made mamluks, amirs and sultans.”²⁰⁹⁰ He writes of divisions between the three classes of Egyptian Arabs, bedouins, and Circassian mamluks, likening them to the feuding Guelphs and Ghibellines of northern and central Italy whose loyalties were split between the pope and the Roman emperor. He remarks that the Arabs desired the sultanate and leadership because their prophet had been an Arab while the Mamluks argued that sovereignty was theirs by right of rule and the Turko-Mongolian steppe conception that God favored them for rule by virtue of their military prowess.²⁰⁹¹

Piloti identifies the caliph and sultan dually as “masters of the Egyptian people,”²⁰⁹² the latter, a group from among whom, “was always and is now their caliph, chief of the pagan faith, as the pope of Rome is the chief of the Christian faith.”²⁰⁹³ He identifies the military role of the caliph which is to ride by the side of the sultan so that

in the case that the sultan should die, the caliph stands in his place until [the Mamluks] have made another [sultan]. The sultan cannot act if the aforementioned caliph does not present him with a robe at the proper hour so that the people will believe for certain that he is the true and appeasing sultan.²⁰⁹⁴

Piloti’s tenure in Egypt was contemporary to the 815/1412 deposition of Faraj and the brief sultanate of the caliph al-Musta‘īn,²⁰⁹⁵ which one historian has identified as an important contribution to our understanding of Mamluk institutional history in regard to the sultanate.²⁰⁹⁶ The actual weakness of the caliph escaped Piloti, and he presents al-Musta‘īn as a powerful holy man whose counsel was sought by Mamluk authorities wishing to derive justice in the sentencing of Faraj, before he himself briefly became sultan.²⁰⁹⁷

²⁰⁸⁹ Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 11.

²⁰⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁰⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁰⁹² Ibid.

²⁰⁹³ Ibid., 11-2.

²⁰⁹⁴ Ibid, 12.

²⁰⁹⁵ Ibid., 12-4.

²⁰⁹⁶ Haarmann, “Mamluk System of Rule,” 23-4.

²⁰⁹⁷ Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 13. See also: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:223-25; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:198.

Two interesting anecdotes most likely involving al-Mu‘taḍid II, the brother and caliphal successor to al-Musta‘īn, made their way into Piloti’s text. Both items shed light on how the Circassian Mamluks may have presented the Abbasid caliphate to non-Muslim visitors. The first mentions the well of the virgin in Maṭariyya, a popular destination for Christian pilgrims, significant for its legendary status as the area in which Jesus and Mary sheltered in Egypt. Near the holy site, local Christian gardeners manufactured a green medicinal balm produced from indigenous plants.²⁰⁹⁸ Bottling the balm for distribution, the gardeners, as a gesture of good faith, sent a generous portion to the court of the Mamluk sultan. Piloti mentions a somber and impromptu ceremony that evolved to honor the gift’s arrival, involving the attendance of the patriarch of the Jacobites and the Cairo-dwelling patriarch of Constantinople. To demonstrate his own access to the holy men of his faith, the Mamluk sultan summoned the caliph, the four chief qadis, and other prominent ‘*ulamā*’. The balm was placed on a fire and heated to a boil as the caliph and religious scholars sat adjacent to the patriarchs on opposite sides of the chamber, both groups quietly praying, engaging in *dhikr* chanting as the heated balm changed from green to red.²⁰⁹⁹ Piloti interpreted the incident as evidence that Muslims had great reverence for the Virgin Mary and that the sultan’s court was aware that the Christian faith produced a precious and powerful item that drew blessings that holy men of both faiths could employ.

The early fifteenth century was also a time of heightened influence for the Catalan pirates based on the island of Cyprus,²¹⁰⁰ leading to troubled relations between the Mamluks and Catalans -- acts of piracy followed by reprisals and interrupted trade.²¹⁰¹ Piloti writes that in 1411, during the reign of Faraj, a group of Tunisian merchants brought their cargo aboard a Catalan ship in Alexandria bound for Tunis and were instead brought to Catalonia and sold as slaves.²¹⁰² Relatives of the merchants complained to the Mamluk sultan who for some reason, perhaps lucrative contracts with the Catalans he did not wish to lose, found himself obliged to accept the

²⁰⁹⁸ Ibid., 28-30. Christians flocked to the site for its significance in the life of Mary and sought the healing powers of the balm. See: Leonardo di Frescobaldi, “Pilgrimage of Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi to the Holy Land” in Theophilus Bellorini, Eugene Hoade, and Bellarmino Bagatti, trans., *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, Publications of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, 1948), 53-4; Giorgio Gucci, “Pilgrimage of Giorgio Gucci to the Holy Land” in *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, 106-8, in which Gucci reports paying two golden ducats for a small phial of the balm; Simone Sigoli, “Pilgrimage of Simone Sigoli to the Holy Land” in *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai, Palestine and Syria in 1384*, 197-8; Félix Fabri, *Voyage en Égypte de Félix Fabri 1483*, trans. Jacques Masson, Collection des voyageurs occidentaux en Égypte 14 (Cairo, 1975), 385-98.

²⁰⁹⁹ Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 30.

²¹⁰⁰ Jonathan Riley Smith (ed.), *The Oxford History of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 248.

²¹⁰¹ Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 222.

²¹⁰² Piloti, *L’Égypte*, 110-1.

brief of the Catalan consul that the Mamluk sultan should not interfere because his own subjects were not involved. According to Piloti, it was not until the reign of Shaykh that more prodding from the Tunisian families (who likely had interests in the merchandise seized by the Catalans as well) caused the Mamluk sultan to unexpectedly summon the Abbasid caliph to rule on the matter.²¹⁰³ The Tunisians went before the “caliph and pope” to demand justice. Despite the protests of the same Catalan consul, the caliph ruled that the Catalans were responsible for 30,000 ducats worth of damages, half to be confiscated in Alexandria and the rest in Damascus. The consul wrote to Damascus advising his countrymen to flee rather than pay. When the sultan learned of his treachery, he had the consul beaten and confined in Alexandria with Catalan merchants ousted from his territories.²¹⁰⁴ That the caliph was chosen to give the ruling is interesting and was done perhaps to relieve Catalan pressure on the sultan by exploiting the illusion that the sultan was prisoner to the whims of the caliph.

Accounts of Muslim Travelers

1. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 779/1377)

Given the stormy relationship between caliph al-Mustakfī and sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 727/1327 at the time the celebrated Moroccan explorer Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Cairo, it is perhaps unsurprising that the North African traveler failed to mention the caliph al-Mustakfī (who would have been under guard) in his otherwise quite detailed description of Cairene notables and religious dignitaries.²¹⁰⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also observed that the caliph was not mentioned in the *khuṭba*.²¹⁰⁶

When Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited the Delhi sultanate in the 740/1340s, however, he reported a great deal about the prestige the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo maintained in India. He wrote of the envoys exchanged between the Indian sultan Muḥammad ibn Tughluq and the Mamluks as well as the embassies, gifts, and caliphal diplomas exchanged between the two.²¹⁰⁷

2. Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī (d. 928/1521)

Having visited Mamluk territory at least twice during the late fifteenth century as part of two pilgrimages to the Ḥijāz, the Iranian Shāfi‘ī jurist and historian Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān

²¹⁰³ Ibid., 111-2.

²¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 112. In addition to problems of chronology, (Faraj ruled until 1412, not 1411), Eliyahu Ashtor has raised other questions about the veracity of this account. See: *Levant Trade*, 223.

²¹⁰⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1964), 43-57.

²¹⁰⁶ Mayer, “Some Remarks,” 36-8.

²¹⁰⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥla*, 155-8, 454. See also: Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 110-3.

Khunjī wrote admiringly of the Mamluks and the Abbasid caliph under their protection. The scion of a notable family who had enjoyed patronage as courtiers of the Aq Qoyunlu Turkmen rulers, Khunjī was greatly concerned with the application and protection of the *sharīʿa* in society.²¹⁰⁸ Falling under the influence of the Egyptian ḥadīth scholar Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī while in the holy cities, Khunjī cultivated a respect and admiration, whether justified or not, of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo and its Mamluk hosts.²¹⁰⁹

A staunch Sunni Muslim theologian, Khunjī abhorred the advent of the Safavid Shāh Ismāʿīl in 1501 and from later exile in Kāshān wrote polemics against the fourteenth century Shiite intellectual al-Ḥillī and the Safavid family in his Persian chronicle, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*.²¹¹⁰ Having visited Mamluk territories on two occasions to perform the *hajj* in 877-9/1473-4 and 886-7/1481-2, Khunjī sought out the chiefs of the religious establishment and even met with Qāyṭbāy in Cairo.²¹¹¹ He saw the Mamluk sultan as a righteous ruler and bulwark, perhaps more so than the Ottomans and Uzbeks, against the peril of Safavid Shīʿism.²¹¹²

The *Taʾrīkh* alludes to Mamluk victory against Hülāgū's Mongols at ʿAyn Jālūt,²¹¹³ as well as the earlier story of the allegedly treacherous Shiite wazir Ibn al-ʿAlqamī, frequently cast as a traitor by Sunni historians that believed him partially responsible for the death of the caliph al-Mustaʿṣim and the loss of Baghdad to the Mongols in 656/1258.²¹¹⁴

In his account of the year that Shāh Ismāʿīl defeated the Aq Qoyunlu Turkmen and took Tabrīz, Khunjī writes that the Circassian Mamluks had inherited the former lands of the Ayyubids and were the rightful rulers from greater Syria to the border of the Euphrates and the lands of northeast Africa, effectively making them heirs to the Abbasid caliphs particularly on account of

²¹⁰⁸ Ulrich Haarmann, “*Khundjī*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 5:53-5. On Khunjī's role as the court-historian of Yaʿqūb b. Uzun Hasan, see: John E. Woods, *The Aqqyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 220.

²¹⁰⁹ For al-Sakhāwī's biographical entries concerning Khunjī, see: *Ḍawʿ*, 6:171, 9:7.

²¹¹⁰ Haarmann, “*Khundjī*.”

²¹¹¹ Ulrich Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance and Righteous Rule: Faḡl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī and the Mamluks of Egypt,” in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, ed. Kambiz Eslami (Princeton, 1998), 112-3.

²¹¹² *Ibid.*, 120. For one historian's take on Mamluk attitudes toward the Safavids, see: David Ayalon, “The End of the Mamlūk Sultanate (Why did the Ottomans Spare the Mamlūks of Egypt and Wipe out the Mamlūks of Syria?)” *Studia Islamica* 65 (1987): 126-34.

²¹¹³ Faḡlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Isfahānī, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, ed. John E. Woods; abridged trans. Vladimir Minorsky, *Persia in A.D. 1478-1490 (Turkmenia, 12)*, rev. ed. John E. Woods (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 188.

²¹¹⁴ Khunjī, *Taʾrīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 414-6. Allegations of sectarian-based treachery leveled at Ibn al-ʿAlqamī for his role in the conquest of Baghdad have been famously exaggerated by the Sunni historians of the Mamluk period. See: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 12, 16-7; Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 332-9; *idem*, “Legitimität durch Erzählung,” 260-2.

their possession of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.²¹¹⁵ Moreover, he describes the ruling government of Egypt as distinct from other Islamic rulers in that the Islamic soldiers of Egypt served as the vanguard regiments of the Abbasid caliphs (*sarāyā-yi khalīfa-i Banī ‘Abbās*) in protecting the borders of Islam against the accursed unbelievers.²¹¹⁶

The early military victories of Shāh Ismā‘īl forced Khunjī to flee for the protection of Uzbek Bukhara at the court of Muḥammad Shībānī Khān, in hope that the latter would rout the Safavids.²¹¹⁷ It came to naught, however, after the Safavid Shāh killed the Uzbek ruler in 1510, forcing him to flee again, this time to the Samarqand of Babur.²¹¹⁸

At the end of his life, on the suggestion of the Uzbek ruler Ubayd Allāh Khan, Khunjī, perhaps under the influence of his hero al-Ghazālī and his teacher Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, compiled the *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* a “Mirror for Princes” manual for good Islamic government, applying *sharī‘a* to the tribal realities of Central Asia.²¹¹⁹ Written more than a decade after his *Ta’rīkh*, the author’s advice manual *Sulūk al-mulūk* revisits the author’s earlier idealization of Mamluk Egypt and the Abbasid caliphate.

The theme of Egypt as the Islamic heartland (*bayzat al-Islām*)²¹²⁰ is revisited in the *Sulūk* when he refers to Cairo as “the exalted abode of Islam,” (*dār al-Islām-i Miṣr-i mu‘aẓẓama*).²¹²¹ It is in the course of a discussion on legal penalties (*ḥudūd*) in the *Sulūk*, that one finds an interesting caricature of the position of the Mamluk sultan in Egypt *vis-à-vis* the Abbasid caliph. Well acquainted with pilgrimage caravans in the Mamluk territories by virtue of his own experience, Khunjī mentions the various pilgrimage caravans of Syria and Iraq²¹²² before claiming that “the caravan sent by the sultan of Egypt is called the *maḥmal* of the Egyptians and is the greatest. The master (*ṣāḥib*) of the great *imārat* within the pilgrimage is the amir of the Egyptian caravan because the Abbasid caliphs in the land of Egypt are independent in their caliphate, and the sultans of Egypt are their deputies.”²¹²³ It was clear to Khunjī that in an Islamicate world fragmented at its peripheries the Abbasid caliphate should be given precedence

²¹¹⁵ Khunjī, *Ta’rīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 187-8; Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance,” 120.

²¹¹⁶ Khunjī, *Ta’rīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 191.

²¹¹⁷ Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance,” 112, 119; idem, “*Khundjī*.”

²¹¹⁸ Haarmann, “*Khundjī*.”

²¹¹⁹ Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance,” 119-20. See also: Lambton, *State and Government*, 179-200.

²¹²⁰ Khunjī, *Ta’rīkh*, 191.

²¹²¹ Faḍlullāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī Muvahḥid (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khvārazmī, 1984), 214. See also: Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance,” 117, 120.

²¹²² Khunjī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, 364-5.

²¹²³ “*Khulafā’-i ‘Abbāsī dar diyār-i Miṣr bi-khilāfat istiqlāl dārānd va salāṭīn-i Miṣr vukalā-yi īshānānd*” (Khunjī, *Sulūk al-mulūk*, 365) also quoted in Haarmann, “Yeomanly Arrogance,” 120. See: Lambton, *State and Government*, 199.

at least during the *hajj* because the holy cities were in Mamluk hands and they enjoyed Abbasid legitimacy.²¹²⁴

Haarmann argued that Khunjī's fundamental misrepresentation of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo stemmed from nostalgia and idealism fueled by the author's desire for a champion to stand against the Shiite Safavids in the form of an independent Sunni caliphate protected by the righteous Mamluk sultans.²¹²⁵ Nevertheless, Khunjī's time in Mamluk Egypt and his training with the '*ulamā*' may have exposed him to a courtly culture that revered (or seemed to revere) the caliph, especially before foreign visitors. Thus Khunjī's remarks may have been the result of his exposure to the culture of the court of Qāyṭbāy, which would have posited the sultan's protection of the caliphate as a sign of his just rule.²¹²⁶

Conclusion

As more Mamluk sources are edited, published and become widely available each year, we find more perspectives from which to study the period. However, the view provided by such literary sources is largely an indirect one considering the absence of substantial archival sources. As a result, scholars have noticed that much of the information, as it has come down to us, has undergone "a selective re-shaping process."²¹²⁷

It is important to recognize that for many '*ulamā*' and chroniclers of the Mamluk period, the Abbasid caliphate in spite of its weakness still represented, as it has been recently put; "hope for an overarching political stability and unity," a confirmation that Islamic civilization had not been destroyed by Hülāgū in 656/1258, but lived on and thrived in Cairo.²¹²⁸ Historians like Ibn Khaldūn and al-Maqrīzī who idealized the Rāshidūn-era caliphate remained ambivalent about the Cairo caliphate, implying in their writings that such a caliphate, while acceptable, was not the most desirable situation. For such thinkers the status quo sufficed only until a better form of

²¹²⁴ Lambton points out that Khunjī's vision of the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo and the concept of imamate at large by no means implied that he saw the Cairo caliph as the sole *imām* serving Islamdom. In fact it may well have been a position at odds with the classical notion of the *imām* discussed in the rest of *Sulūk al-mulūk*. See: *State and Government*, 199.

²¹²⁵ Haarmann, "Yeomanly Arrogance," 120.

²¹²⁶ On Qāyṭbāy's rumored attitude towards the caliphate at court, see: Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, *Naḡā' is al-majālis al-sulṭāniyya*, published in *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī: ṣaḡahāt min ta'rīkh Miṣr fī qarn al-'āshir hijrī*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (Cairo 1941), 111.

²¹²⁷ Donald S. Richards, "Glimpses of Provincial Mamluk Society from the Documents of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 45; Kikuchi Tadayoshi, "An Analysis of 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ, al-Ḥanaḡī al-Malaṭī's Description of the Year 848: On the Process of Writing History in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2006): 29.

²¹²⁸ Allen J. Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun: Life and Times* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 7.

Islamic leadership (presumably one in line with the ideals of the Rāshidūn caliphs) might manifest itself.

The consensus among Mamlukists is that the Mamluks and the *‘ulamā’* cooperated in a state of symbiosis.²¹²⁹ Religious scholars remained appreciative of the military defense, religious endowments, and the perpetuation of the infrastructure that secured their livelihoods.²¹³⁰ Alone and divested of power, the caliphate lacked tangible authority, yet continued to be seen as a necessary part of the equation symbolically representing the vested interests of both the religious and ruling elite.

Although this picture is far from complete, the survey in this chapter has demonstrated varying degrees of interest in the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo among historians of varied backgrounds. The present chapter has attempted to explore the spectrum of contemporary scholarly understandings of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk politics and society as well as discuss the ways that a historian’s background influenced the nature and degree of his interest in the caliphate. In most cases, the background and vocation of a writer influenced his approach to the caliphate. Administrative insiders and religious scholars with interests at court tended to speak highly of the Abbasid caliphate as a reflection of the Mamluk commitment to Islam. On the other hand, relatively more independent authors such as al-Maqrīzī or those new to Cairo like Ibn Khaldūn watched the caliphs from a cautious distance and took a pragmatic stance toward them in their writing. The reports of al-Suyūfī and his student Ibn Iyās indicate that even by late Mamluk times, debate persisted as to what the caliphate should be and which powers it should have, questions as old as the caliphal office itself.

Royal histories of the early Mamluk period adopted and projected the idea that the re-establishment of the caliphate had been a good deed of Baybars, helping in part to explain his authority and overlook his complicity in the murder of his predecessor. Court historians were obliged to portray their patrons in the best possible light, sometimes emphasizing the esteem of the sultans towards the caliphate.

Many scholars and administrators who engaged in historiography such as al-Ṣafadī, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and al-Suyūfī enjoyed personal relationships and family ties with the Abbasid caliphs and were often, though not always, inclined towards sympathy with their family. Proximity and sentimentality could influence the biography of a well-liked caliph, although historians with complex precommitments such as Ibn Taghrībirdī or even pragmatists

²¹²⁹ Berkey, “Mamluks as Muslims,” 166-7; idem, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 7-8, 20; Lev, “Symbiotic Relations,” 1-26. For another perspective, see: Yossef Rapoport, “Royal Justice and Religious Law: *Ḥiyāsah* and Shari‘ah under the Mamluks,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 16 (2012): 71-102.

²¹³⁰ Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 7; Khan, *Political Thought of Ibn Taymīyah*, 8.

like al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn remained aloof or dismissive toward the caliphs. It is difficult to diagnose the precise reasons *why* an author presented the caliphal role in Mamluk history as he did, though background and position played no small part in their exegesis of recent or ongoing events.²¹³¹

²¹³¹ Perho, “Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī,” 120.

Chapter Five: Rhetoric Vs. Reality: Mamluk Documents and the Ideality of a Cairo Caliphate

Introduction

For its role in Mamluk public life Abbasid protocol developed patterns honed over the decades by the Mamluk chancery to officiate in domestic affairs, including coronations, as well as in foreign relations, for example, providing caliphal recognition or warnings to neighboring Muslim rulers. Administrative documents including investiture deeds and succession contracts focused on defining and affirming the rights (*ḥuqūq*) of the caliph and his “partner” the sultan. Allusions to the reigning Abbasid imparted a classical caliphal authority to official writs from the sultan’s capital. Though largely propagandistic in tone, the documents counted among a small number of venues in which the theoretical power and authority of the Abbasid caliphate could be defined as far-reaching and authentic, thereby providing a basis for citadel ritual.²¹³² This chapter seeks to bridge the gap between the ideality and reality of the Abbasid caliphate in the Mamluk period. Although many succession documents of the Mamluk period (especially those relating to caliphal delegation) were based on existing templates and language from the earlier Seljuq and Ayyubid periods, this is not the place for such a discussion.²¹³³

If we understand Mamluk documents and documents generally as “the authentic traces of tools necessary for the needs of daily life”²¹³⁴ or broader still as “everything that has remained as traces of past events,”²¹³⁵ documents involving the Abbasid caliphate represent a deliberate attempt to perpetuate a tradition and culture from an earlier time deemed vital to the existence of Mamluk society. While many documents such as bills of sale or endowment deeds serve modern

²¹³² Despite the disrespect of many of the sultans towards individual caliphs, Mamluk investiture deeds retained all their somber gravity where the caliphate was concerned. See: Maurice Gaudesroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks d’après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative précédée d’une introduction sur l’organisation gouvernementale* (Paris, 1923), xxiii.

²¹³³ Annemarie Schimmel traced the origin of contracts of authority made for Muslim princes, to the Prophet’s issue of a document to the Banū al-Ḥārith ibn Ka’b of Yemen four months before his death. See: “Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Agypten,” *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 16. Similar collections of Persian documents slightly earlier as well as contemporary to the Mamluk period may prove helpful in future attempts at comparing investiture deeds. These include the collection of letters and deeds of appointment compiled by the head of the Seljuq sultan Sanjar’s *dīwān al-inshā’*; Muntajab al-Dīn Badī‘ al-Juvainī, as: *Kitāb-i ‘atabat al-kataba: majmū‘at murāsālāt-i dīwān-i Sulṭān Sanjar*, ed. Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Tehran, 1329/1950); as well as the contemporary collection of exemplary appointment documents attributed to the Ilkhanid and later Jalayrid bureaucrat-secretary Muḥammad ibn Hindūshāh Nakhjivānī. See: *Dastūr al-kātib fī ta’yīn al-marātib*, ed. A. A. Ali-zade (Moscow, 1964-76).

²¹³⁴ Frédéric Bauden, “Mamluk Era Documentary Studies: The State of the Art,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 15.

²¹³⁵ Lucian Reinfandt, “Mamlūk Documentary Studies,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 286.

historians as unintentional historical sources, the documents analyzed in the current study sought to capture the essence of Islamic ritual and Mamluk ceremonial and project them for posterity. Many investiture deeds are composed with a sense of historical consciousness, which may help to explain their frequent injection into formal historical narratives, encyclopedias, and anthologies.²¹³⁶

In general, documents prepared by the Mamluk chancery tended to be a collaborative effort among professional scribes demonstrating adherence both to ideological continuity and a well-defined stylistic protocol.²¹³⁷ Documents referred to specific rulers but the clerks composing them conformed to the rhetorical and ideological concerns of the chancery, often under the guidance of the head of the chancery (*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshāʾ*) or the confidential secretary (*kātib al-sirr*).²¹³⁸ These were positions that in Cairo tended to be dominated during the early Mamluk period by the Banū ʿAbd al-Zāhir and the Banū Faḍlallāh families. Executing more than mundane state procedures, chancery scribes used the composition of important ceremonial documents to exhibit their erudition and skill as well-trained literati with proficient awareness of what might be construed as a pervasive “deep culture.” Indeed, participating in “the literary communication of the educated class was an important symbol of distinction and proof that one belonged to the educated elite.”²¹³⁹

In light of what he termed an apparent “*adabization*” of the *ʿulamāʾ* (many of whom were accomplished poets) and “*ulamaization*” of *adab* by the Mamluk period,²¹⁴⁰ Thomas Bauer has identified five major fields of activity in which the Mamluk *adīb* or litterateur was expected to

²¹³⁶ The Mamluks and their Ayyubid predecessors were heirs of a complex bureaucracy whose scribes compiled a number of secretarial manuals that included documents and instructions on how to execute official procedures. See: Jonathan P. Berkey, “Culture and Society During the Late Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume I, Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 398.

²¹³⁷ Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 313-4; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 17.

²¹³⁸ For Ibn Taghrībirdī’s remarks on the good qualities a *kātib al-sirr* should possess, see: *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963–72), 14:174-5. See also Carl Petry’s useful remarks on the *kātib al-sirr* position: *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 205-9.

²¹³⁹ Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk Literature as a Means of Communication,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 32.

²¹⁴⁰ During the Abbasid period, the bureaucrats and secretarial class (*kuttāb*) were primarily the literary tastemakers, but during the reign of the Seljuqs, the *adab*-oriented attitudes and values of the *kuttāb* fused with the Sunni-oriented culture of the *ʿulamāʾ*. A cross-pollination took place as “*adab* was ulama-ized and the ulama were *adab*-ized,” with the end result being that, as the influence of the *kuttāb* receded, the *ʿulamāʾ* came to the fore, involving themselves in various forms of *adab* including poetry, prose, and panegyrics which became their primary method of communication. See: Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 108-9; idem, “Communication and Emotion: The Case of Ibn Nubātah’s *Kindertotenlieder*,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7 (2003): 62-3.

have proficiency: poetry, anthology composition, the ability to produce *maqamāt* literature,²¹⁴¹ *inshā'* literature,²¹⁴² as well as the theory of literature and rhetoric.²¹⁴³ By placing *inshā'* fourth on the list, Bauer argues that Mamluk documents, including official and private correspondence must be considered and evaluated as a legitimate mode of literature. Many chancery documents included rhymed prose text (*sqj'*) and were often considered worthy of inclusion in literary anthologies allowing them to live a “second life” beyond their initial pragmatic communicative purposes.²¹⁴⁴ Thus, Mamluk ceremonial documents, like every other work of the period’s literature, were “a manifestation of an act of communication.”²¹⁴⁵ If interpreted as a kind of literature, the documents were meant to convey to the masses (particularly among the educated classes) that an important transfer of power had taken place.²¹⁴⁶ It is no coincidence that many of these documents were read publicly to members of the military and educated elite as part of a grand performance.²¹⁴⁷

It is in this context that we might suggest that documents involving the Abbasid caliphate may be analyzed as a form of *de facto* literature which further elucidates the symbolic relationship between the caliph, the sultan, and the *dawla*.²¹⁴⁸ Investiture deeds and caliphal

²¹⁴¹ On the Arabic *maqamāt* literary genre, see: Badī‘ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, *Maqamat (Séances) choisies et trad. de l’arabe avec une étude sur le genre par Régis Blachère et Pierre Masnou* (Paris: Lincksieck, 1957).

²¹⁴² On *inshā'* literature which deals with style or composition of official state documents, letters, and other state papers, see: Claude Cahen, “Notes de diplomatie arabo-musulmane,” *Journal Asiatique* (1963): 311-25.

²¹⁴³ Bauer, “Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” 108, 119.

²¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 125-6; idem, “Means of Communication,” 23, 50.

²¹⁴⁵ Bauer, “Means of Communication,” 23-4.

²¹⁴⁶ Ibid. There are essentially two forms of non-mutually exclusive communication in Mamluk literature: the pragmatic and the literary. Pragmatic communication concerns daily functions, based on the notion that texts conform to reality and evoke a specific reaction from listeners/readers. Literary texts are not bound by the same rule and are hence afforded an artistic dimension. Many of the documents in this chapter serve the pragmatic purpose of publicizing changes in the caliphate or sultanate, while couched in ornate literary communication which made use of stylistic elements such as rhyme, metaphor, and parallelism aimed at a highly cultured audience. Nearly all of the documents were subsequently included as worthy specimens in chronicles, scribal anthologies, and *inshā'* collections.

²¹⁴⁷ Contemporary historical sources frequently mention that deeds of investiture were read aloud as an important part of Mamluk ceremonial in which the *taqlīd* or ‘*ahd*’ was presented publicly during the *mawkib* (procession). Some scholars have suggested that the Mamluks picked up on Fatimid processions and the overall presentation of a public face connected to copious ceremonial rituals. See: Jo Van Steenberg, “Ritual, Politics, and the City in Mamluk Cairo: The Bayna l-Qaṣrayn as a Dynamic ‘Lieu de Mémoire’,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alexander Beihammer and Stavroula Constantinou (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 229-31.

²¹⁴⁸ We must stress that these documents were not deliberately composed as literature. There is room to discuss the authors’ intentions, most of which tended to be ideological, which may disqualify them as “literature” in some sense. It is indeed problematic to analyze such documents as if they were intended to be literature, as many of them — primarily as documents, had important messages to express. However, these “documents,” often taken at face value to be factual, must be read with the realization that there is a conscience attempt by the stylist, secretary, or ideologue to convey a deliberate ideology. Nevertheless, the

succession contracts are understandably rich in allusions to the lofty graces associated with the Prophet's family and the descendants of his uncle al-'Abbās. Many of the deeds and contracts go beyond the sparse details of bills of sale or other agreements, frequently following a formula including a flowery introduction, appeals to the Qur'ān, praise for God, the Prophet, and the Abbasid house. To understand them merely under the vague heading of "documents" is rather misleading as their composition frequently implies the intent for grand spectacle.

In the present chapter, I have chosen to engage with the rhetoric of the documents and treat it contextually within Mamluk politics. In light of their literary qualities, the language of the documents, to some degree, served a social purpose.²¹⁴⁹ The rhetoric was directed at the Mamluk elite, both to appease the *'ulamā'* and assure them that Mamluk rule preserved important Islamic institutions, and also to promote a culture of acceptance and obedience to the organization of the latest sultan's government by the Mamluk amirs, many of whom were recent, and if not cynical, impressionable converts to Islam. Documents pertaining to the caliphate in Mamluk times provide a supplement to our literary historical sources, even, if as some scholars have suggested, they fail to reflect the existing temporal impotence of the Abbasid caliph.²¹⁵⁰

Documents have survived for our study in several ways. Historians such as Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, Shāfi' ibn 'Alī, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, and Ibn al-Furāt often held chancery positions and selectively incorporated documents into their histories.²¹⁵¹ Original and model documents have also been preserved in chancery manuals and administrative encyclopedias, notably in the *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'* and *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa* of al-Qalqashandī,²¹⁵² as well as other works such as Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī's *al-Ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf*, al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh's *Tathqīf al-Ta'rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah*

style and content of the documents prove every bit as important as the basic information they convey insofar as succession to high office is concerned.

²¹⁴⁹ In the case of investiture deeds, the documents were theoretically intended to be publicized beyond the inner circle of the sultan and the citadel and, in some sense, carry ramifications for society. In this context, the authors, or "stylists" of the documents sometimes unintentionally revealed conventions and expectations. As Anne Broadbridge has observed, chancery practice, ritual, and diplomatic protocol enabled every member of the Mamluk system (and those outsiders who dealt with them) "to receive crucial messages about status and the relations of power that underlay the ceremonies." See: "Diplomatic Conventions in the Mamluk Sultanate," *Annales islamologiques* 41 (2007): 115.

²¹⁵⁰ Urbain Vermeulen, "Une lettre du calife al-Mustakfī à Dāwud b. Yūsuf b. Rasūl (707 A.H.)," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 1, *Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1992, 1993 and 1994*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 370-1.

²¹⁵¹ In most cases, original versions of the documents have not survived.

²¹⁵² The collection of documents preserved by al-Qalqashandī, whose historical research and awareness of earlier developments proves extensive, is by far the richest and most important source for this study. See: Walther Björkman, "Diplomatic," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 2:301-7.

al-sharīf, and the lesser known *munsha'āt* manual of Ibn Ḥijja, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshā'*, an anthology of models and documents dealing largely with writs of investiture.²¹⁵³

Although graced by an abundance of original sources, the current study is obstructed by problems no doubt familiar to earlier students of Mamluk diplomatic and documentary studies. In the absence of a systematic archive for the period, it is impossible to study documents chronologically or completely. While documents preserved by Mamluk literary sources are invaluable, they cannot supplant the importance of an organized and complete archive akin to the one enjoyed by Ottomanists.²¹⁵⁴ A sampling of sultanic and caliphal investiture documents has survived, though most date from the Bahārī Turkish period (648-784/1250-1382). Without documents that observe the entire breadth of the Mamluk sultanate, it is difficult to map evolution or continuity in Mamluk ceremonial practices involving the Abbasid caliphate.²¹⁵⁵ It is important to bear in mind that the documentary evidence is fragmentary, and therefore biased. With only a small portion of what was produced, we may draw only tentative conclusions from isolated moments that survived the ravages of time, represented by the documents in their historical context.²¹⁵⁶

It is equally necessary to confront concerns of authenticity, as the documents were entirely preserved and re-copied by historians and chancery workers rather than as the undisturbed originals found among caches of documents unearthed in former Mamluk territory.²¹⁵⁷ It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these copied documents have been based on originals and in some cases considerable discrepancies exist among multiple copies.²¹⁵⁸

²¹⁵³ R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 40-9; Donald P. Little, "Documents as a Source for Mamluk History," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 6; Bauden, "Mamluk Era Documentary Studies," 20-1.

²¹⁵⁴ Although recent studies are optimistic about the existence of pre-modern Islamic documents, in explaining the absence of any state archives, many modern scholars agree that Islamdom, prior to the sixteenth century, lacked organized social institutions committed to maintaining archives. See: Bauden, "Mamluk Era Documentary Studies," 17.

²¹⁵⁵ Changes in diplomatic protocol often signify important political shifts and fluctuating relationships of power within the Mamluk sultanate. See: Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions," 97, 107-12.

²¹⁵⁶ Later Abbasid documents issued in Cairo may not have been preserved due to the political quietism of the institution in the later Mamluk period and also because historians deemed the earlier documents to have been sufficiently exemplary for inclusion in chronicles and scribal encyclopedias.

²¹⁵⁷ Examples of such collections include the Geniza papers associated with the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Cairo, the document collection of St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai, and the documents of the Islamic Museum of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem.

²¹⁵⁸ The historian Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī, claimed that he had shortened his copy of the investiture document of Abū Bakr ibn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to avoid prolixity. See: *Ta'rikh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥ wa-awladih*, ed. Barbara Schäfer (Wiesbaden: 1977), 1:127. Later authors such as al-Suyūṭī often made use of caliphal investiture documents as filler to supplement scanty historical information on the caliphs, thereby editing the documents and presenting them as secondary points of interest.

A historian's purpose for including documents in a historical work is seldom solely to preserve posterity. Royal histories often included investiture deeds to emphasize a sultan's piety and adherence to Islamic mores. As a high-ranking bureaucrat, Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī had access to the then existing archives of the Mamluk sultanate, though his level of fidelity to the original documents is unknown and his primary purpose in displaying full documents was didactic.²¹⁵⁹ Al-Qalqashandī frequently included authentic documents, though without important elements such as marks of registration or more generally the "non-textual" elements of the documents which tell its story.²¹⁶⁰

Interpreting medieval documents is indeed a treacherous enterprise. Few modern scholars have taken the time to immerse themselves in the culture and practice of the pre-modern Islamic chancery.²¹⁶¹ As a result, at least some of the intertextuality, allusions, puns, double entendres (*tawriyya*), and other contemporary references and devices are lost to modern researchers. Medieval Arabic stylists frequently composed documents in an exceedingly ornate vernacular as the documents were, in many cases, intended to be read aloud before the sultan's inner circle or during state processions. The assumption may have been that one must be a cultured person of the period to understand much of the document.²¹⁶²

How, then, does a study of the Cairo caliphs under Mamluk tutelage benefit through the examination of documentary evidence that only appears to enshrine political pageantry? Mamluk caliphal and sultanic documents demonstrate an important convergence of the religious and political and an intersection between the various classes of men of the pen, the turban, and the

²¹⁵⁹ In some cases al-Qalqashandī edited or altered original documents to serve as templates. Most of al-Qalqashandī's documents date from the Mamluk period and include samples of royal decrees, investiture diplomas, peace treaties, letters, and reports. See: Little, "Documents as a Source for Mamluk History," 7; Björkman, "Diplomatic." Lucian Reinfandt ("Mamlūk Documentary Studies," 287-8) argues that unlike the original documents that comprise documentary studies, those preserved in collected volumes such as the *Ṣubḥ*, should be treated as models for use in composing deeds of investiture.

²¹⁶⁰ Reinfandt, "Mamlūk Documentary Studies," 301.

²¹⁶¹ However, several scholars have taken steps toward a better understanding of Mamluk chancery practice. See: Samir al-Droubi, *Muqaddima fī dirāsāt al-tarjama wa-al-tarājima fī dīwān al-inshā' al-mamlūkī* (Amman, 2008); Malika Dekkiche, "Le Caire carrefour des ambassades: Étude historique et diplomatique de la correspondance échangée entre les sultans mamlouks circassiens et les souverains timourides et turcomans (Qara Qoyunlu - Qaramanides) au XVe. d'après le ms. ar. 4440 (BnF, Paris)" (PhD diss., Université de Liège, 2011), 241-75; Elias Muhanna, "Innovation and Tradition in Scribal (Best) Practices: The Concept of *Iṣṭilāḥ* in Chancery Literature," (paper presented at the First Conference of the School of Mamluk Studies in Venice, Italy on 26 June 2014).

²¹⁶² This does not pose much of a concern for this study, however, as the rhetoric is frequently couched in Islamic terminology. Most *ḥamdala* sections are primarily concerned with praising God and the Prophet with familiar Islamic formulas and pious expressions. Even though many investiture deeds were "performed" before an audience, some employed a standard phraseology that was likely intelligible to the average person; whether an 'ālim, a Mamluk amir, or a Cairene bystander. Although at times florid, the rhetoric contained major ideas of tradition and legitimacy that seem clear enough.

sword.²¹⁶³ Such documents also reveal formal expectations for the caliphate at court and in society at large while shedding light on practices central to Mamluk religious ideology such as the *bay'a* and the primordial covenant (*'ahd*) between God and man. The documents, in addition to their instructions about issues of succession and legal designation, reflect the importance of the caliphate in the Mamluk chancery and its role in the composition of letters of state, appointments to high office, and other business.

The collection of texts analyzed in this chapter comprises surviving documents extracted from works of history and scribal encyclopedias. While largely confined to matters of investiture and succession, the documents touch upon a wide range of information. An initial classification of the documents helps formulate a thematic framework suitable for a thorough exploration of the subject matter.²¹⁶⁴ The current study focuses on 1) deeds of investiture (*'ahd*, *taqlīd*, *taqrīr*) issued by the caliphs for the sultans or to announce the advent of a new caliph, 2) testamentary designations (*'ahd*, *taqlīd*, *'aqd*) in which a reigning caliph duly names his designated successor (*walī al-'ahd*), 3) letters sent to and from the caliphs to local amirs and foreign princes, 4) the text of sermons allegedly given by caliphs, and 5) a brief discussion of relevant coins and inscriptions.

I. Deeds of Investiture (*'ahd*, *taqlīd*, *taqrīr*)²¹⁶⁵

In the Mamluk period contracts were often limited to political enactments, civil engagements, or treaties. They were also used by a ruler to appoint his successor.²¹⁶⁶ In the context of the present chapter, the *'ahd* (pl. *'uhūd*) was essentially the contract between the caliph and the man who stood to obtain the plenary powers of the classical Abbasid caliphate, the Mamluk sultan.

The Arabic verbal noun *taqlīd* as a convention of appointment has a long history in Islamicate civilization, often used for high officials such as wazirs and qadis, though by the Mamluk period it had become largely confined to high-ranking officials such as sultans, caliphs, or the *kātib al-sirr*.²¹⁶⁷ *Taqlīd*, as it appears in Mamluk sources, appears to be interchangeable

²¹⁶³ On the various branches and subdivisions of these three groups, see: Aḥmad ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2010), 3:304-12; Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'* (Cairo, 1963), 4:14-43, Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks*, lv-lxiv; Holt, "Structure of Government," 51-60.

²¹⁶⁴ Donald P. Little, "The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History," *Der Islam* 57 (1980): 196.

²¹⁶⁵ Different sources refer to the same documents sometimes as *'ahd*, *taqlīd*, *tawqī'*, *taqrīr*, etc. Other distinctions likely depend on the document as well as the period.

²¹⁶⁶ Joseph Schacht, "'Ahd," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:255.

²¹⁶⁷ Björkman, "Diplomatic."

with other words such as *tawqīʿ*, *taqrīr*, *ʾahd*, and *ʾaqd*, all of which are synonyms that describe diplomas of appointment to high office.²¹⁶⁸

Physical copies of the documents themselves comprised a valuable part of Abbasid ceremonial in the Mamluk court. After the ceremony of Baybars, almost every new ascending sultan had his *ʾahd* or *taqlīd* read publicly and paraded through the streets of Cairo with great pomp. The *mubāyaʿa* ceremony and festivities surrounding Baybars's mutual investiture with the caliph al-Mustanshir set important precedents to which we can trace both the tenor and composition of subsequent Mamluk era investiture documents.²¹⁶⁹

Most medieval Arabic administrative documents are divided into at least three components: the initial elements (*ṭirāz* or *iftitāḥ*), the main body of the text (*matn*) and the concluding protocols (*khawātim*).²¹⁷⁰ Investiture deeds or letters of appointment from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods regularly contain three key elements: the *ḥamdala*, a customary section which begins by praising God, the Prophet, his companions, and the family of al-ʿAbbās, followed by the *tafwīd* -- often a short clause within the body of the document delegating authority from the caliph to the sultan, and finally the *waṣīyya* which contains ethical and religious counsel, advice, and the duties of the office recipient with further insight on how best to execute them.²¹⁷¹

It is in the delegation of affairs to the sultan that earlier ideas of the East were reflected in the Mamluk period. Many Mamluk jurists and chancery secretaries wrote with a subliminal reading of al-Māwardī in mind, largely taking his positions in *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* for granted and often presenting them as the way of the world. Both the political theory and the investiture documents of the Mamluk period reflect a far-reaching dissemination of al-Māwardī's presentation.²¹⁷² The best way to proceed may be to read document and theory together, while

²¹⁶⁸ This is not unanimously the case, however, as Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī instead calls the investiture document for Baybars a *taqrīr* (*Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntazaʿa min al-sīra al-Ẓāhiriyya*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Khuwaytir (Riyadh, 1976), 38). The word also has a complex meaning in the context of Islamic law, in which it suggests the adoption of a legal decision or principle, or the following of a legal decision taken by another jurist. See: Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006), 48.

²¹⁶⁹ Schimmel describes the public reading of investiture deeds as an important verbal homage to the sultan (which was testified to by the caliph and qadis). The conspicuous choice to describe the deed of designation as a "*taqlīd*" in itself implies blind acceptance and obedience. See: Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 16; Holt, "Structure of Government," 44-5.

²¹⁷⁰ See: Björkman, "Diplomatic"; D. S. Richards, *Mamluk Administrative Documents from St. Catherine's Monastery* (Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 18-31.

²¹⁷¹ Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 167.

²¹⁷² See: Jo Van Steenberg, "Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: Interpreting a 14th-Century Panegyric," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 28.

bearing in mind or perhaps assuming a subliminal reading of al-Māwardī on behalf of the authors.²¹⁷³

A. Delegation and Caliphal Authority

By far the most salient feature of sultanic investiture documents is the delegation of powers from the caliph to the Mamluk sultan. The theory of delegation of powers in Islamic political theory provided a means for the military leader or sultan to legally usurp or otherwise alter the prerogatives of the caliphate.²¹⁷⁴ Works of public or constitutional law such as the *Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya* enjoyed a long-lasting influence in Mamluk Egypt as many jurists simply understood the idea of an amir or governor's usurpation of power and *ad hoc* delegation by the Abbasid caliph as a given.²¹⁷⁵ The caliph, thought to embody divine sovereignty, acted as a unique source of authority bestowing legitimacy on the sultan through his delegation attested to by an *'ahd* that permitted the sultan to rule in his name.²¹⁷⁶

In Mamluk times, the investiture deed that has garnered the most scholarly attention is the *taqlīd* for Baybars. Its composer, the *kātib al-sirr* Fakhr al-Dīn Luqmān establishes a theme of the caliph's gratitude for having received sanctuary in Cairo. According to the document, preserved by Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, a kind of enlightened wisdom drove al-Mustansir to delegate sovereignty over Egypt, Syria, Diyar Bakr, the Hījāz, Yemen, and the Euphrates territory along with future land wrested from the unbelievers to Baybars.²¹⁷⁷ The author assures the sultan that the caliph is both pleased by and aware of his tremendous service to Islam and society:

²¹⁷³ For a similar discussion of the lasting influence of al-Māwardī's theory in regard to the *maẓālim* court in early Mamluk Egypt, see: Jørgen S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Maẓālim under the Bahrī Mamlūks, 662/1264-789/1387* (Istanbul: Nederland Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1985), 27-33, 133.

²¹⁷⁴ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 166.

²¹⁷⁵ In his section on the wazirate, al-Māwardī discusses two kinds of wazirs tapped to shoulder the burdens of the *imām* or caliph: executive (*wizāra tanfīdh*) and delegative (*wizāra tafwīḍ*). See: Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2006), 25-33.

²¹⁷⁶ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 166. Having grown accustomed to rule by other than the caliph for several centuries, Muslim society may have understood judges and most other public officials to have derived their power from the king, sultan, or the community at large. See: Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam – Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 240, 244.

²¹⁷⁷ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 104. Scholars have observed that the caliph had no power to bestow any such lands, let alone those in the hands of the regime's enemies east of Syria. See: Arnold, *The Caliphate*, 94; P. M. Holt, "The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 2 (1975): 244. Holt suggested that the claim was made to publicize a program of expansion into Mongol lands and to announce Baybars as a universal sultan of Islam.

The Commander of the Faithful shows his gratitude for these favors, and recognizes that in the absence of your concern [in his affair], things would become damaged beyond repair. [...] Thus he has entrusted to you, in a unique instance of generosity, care of the armies and subjects; excluding from this not one single city or fortress [...]²¹⁷⁸

The remainder of the document emphasizes Baybars's duty to uphold justice before God, and the necessity to appoint governors and subordinates in his lands, both former prerogatives of the Abbasid caliph. A key theme of the document is restoration, an important task delegated to the sultan that transformed him into a divinely appointed instrument charged with securing prosperity.

An explicit clause delegating authority mirroring those found in later documents appears to be absent and instead Fakhr al-Dīn Luqmān merely acknowledges that there is none better than Baybars to receive the obedience of the people due to his noble qualities. The delegation implied by the caliph's ceremonial handclasp is reflected in the document by the acknowledgment that Baybars had elevated the Abbasid caliph and chosen him as his guide upon the right path.²¹⁷⁹ The document explains that Baybars is the true leader and the caliph is on hand to lend spiritual support and ease any misgivings among the populace on submitting to the Mamluk sultan.²¹⁸⁰ Shortly after the ceremony in Cairo, Baybars, following the Fatimid tradition, issued another document announcing his *bay'a* in Damascus, notifying the 'ulamā' of Syria that his *mubāya'a* with the caliph had been in full observance of the *sharī'a*. The document labels it "the affair of happy splendor for the community" (*amr bahj al-umma*) in which the caliph has been treated well and unity preserved.²¹⁸¹

It is noteworthy that the caliph's name is absent from Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's "*taqlīd*" for the son of Baybars, al-Sa'īd Baraka, who had been named successor by his father early in Shawwāl 662/July-August 1264 when Baybars abruptly planned to confront a Mongol delegation.²¹⁸² On 17 Shawwāl/12 August the document was read, and in the voice of Baybars, made use of the tropes that Baraka was a righteous branch from the tree of his family and a new full moon.²¹⁸³ The document, removing any allusion to the Abbasid caliphate (as Baybars had been invested by

²¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁷⁹ In the era of the Great Seljuqs, the position of the sultan was seen as less of a guide for society along the lines of the caliph, and more as an arbiter. See: Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, 2nd ed. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 27.

²¹⁸⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 104-8.

²¹⁸¹ Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān* (Hyderabad, 1954), 1:451.

²¹⁸² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 203-10; Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 89-92; Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmūrī (Beirut, 1990-2000), 49:20. For the dynastic impulse among early Bahārī sultans such as Baybars and Qalāwūn, see: Holt, "Position and Power," 239.

²¹⁸³ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 207.

two of them in almost as many years), says notably that “there is no administration -- in whole or in part -- of a kingdom except through us or through our son. There is neither sword nor sustenance (*rizq*) without our command [...] There is no throne of sultanate (*dastu salṭana*) save for ours alone, the like of which brings clarity to radiance. [...] There is no *minbar* whose sermon does not reverberate with our two names. There are no kinds of dirhams or dinars except those that shine with [our names] [...].”²¹⁸⁴ The document names Baraka heir to power solely on the legitimating authority of Baybars and claims that the young prince satisfies the demands for leadership. It is apparent from the document that Baybars, the rightful delegate of the caliph, no longer needs the caliph’s approval to make appointments or even establish a dynasty of his own.²¹⁸⁵ Before this, only caliphs could legitimate sultans. Al-Māwardī had posited that the sultan, once he had attained the caliph/*imām*’s authority as acting *amīr*, was thereafter free to appoint whomever he wished, with or without the explicit approval of the caliph/*imām*. Even so, this particular selection appears to have left the caliph’s position in theoretical limbo.

Nevertheless, the forty year reign of the caliph al-Ḥākim (661-701/1262-1302), a crucial participant in the investitures of no fewer than eight Mamluk sultans, witnessed the composition of at least six writs of investiture preserved by Mamluk sources. Once Baybars had secured the Abbasid caliphate in his capital, the developing religio-political culture demanded that later sultans undergo similar investiture ceremonies involving caliphal delegation and symbolic robes of honor.²¹⁸⁶ Investiture documents for Qalāwūn, his three sons al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī, al-Ashraf Khalīl, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as well as the non-Qalawunid usurpers Kitbughā and Lājīn, provide further possibility of understanding the joint legitimization and delegating capabilities of the Abbasid caliphate. Several of the documents were composed by the same two secretaries, namely Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir and Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī.²¹⁸⁷

Due perhaps to disparities in training and practice between Fakhr al-Dīn Luqmān and his successor Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, differences can be found in the composition of the *taqlīd* of Baybars and the *‘ahd* of Qalāwūn. Qalāwūn’s *‘ahd* document was likely tailored to the sultan’s specifications and apparent self-perception. In perhaps clearer language than the investiture deed

²¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 208. For the coins of Baybars and his son, which made use of similar titulature, symbols, and slogans, see: Paul Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964), 85-109.

²¹⁸⁵ P. M. Holt, “Succession in the Early Mamluk Sultanate,” in *23. Deutscher Orientalistentag: Ausgewählte Vorträge*, edited by E. von Schuler [Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft Supplement VII] (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989), 146.

²¹⁸⁶ Jonathan P. Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 12.

²¹⁸⁷ Many of these documents appear to be composed for usurpers, see: Stefan Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 181.

of Baybars, the *tafwīd* clause in Qalāwūn's document establishes that the sultan has been invested with all the former prerogatives of the classical caliphate:

The command of our master the Commander of the Faithful - may God honor him - went forth that all that God had entrusted to [him] should go hence to the sublime position of the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn] in [all] matters of sovereignty [...]²¹⁸⁸

It is in this wide and perhaps deliberately vague delegation of authority from caliph to sultan in Qalāwūn's document, that one scholar has attempted to expose injury done to both the symbolic and theoretical value of the caliphate by the wording of the clause. Qalāwūn was perhaps cautious to avoid having the limits of his authority spelled out, instead calling for a "general, complete, perfect, intact, regular, and systematic sovereignty."²¹⁸⁹ The *tafwīd* clause thus accurately depicts the existing relationship between al-Ḥākim and Qalāwūn, as the latter was simply in search of a blanket legitimacy to cover his authority before slowly distancing himself from the caliph. Qalāwūn nevertheless allowed the symbolic value of the caliph as representative of divine sovereignty on earth to quietly continue from the shadows.²¹⁹⁰ Like Baybars, Qalāwūn based his legitimacy on management of the Abbasid caliphate, though without the foundational role or the other important ceremonies his predecessor had used.²¹⁹¹

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir likewise penned the investiture documents of Qalāwūn's son and desired successor, al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī, as well as his eventual successor al-Ashraf Khalīl; the latter, much to his father's chagrin, having inherited the sultanate only after the death of his brother and favorite of their father, al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī.²¹⁹² Al-Qalqashandī claims that Qalāwūn commissioned the document from Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir to be made out to his son. Unlike the previous documents, the *ḥamdala* of al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī's *'ahd* does not follow praises of God and the Prophet with praise for the line of al-'Abbās or the caliphate established by his descendants. Nevertheless, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir writes that there were men around the Prophet who laid the foundations of religion and maintained the army.²¹⁹³ Perhaps the logical progression from his own disregard for the caliphate,

²¹⁸⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:118; idem, *Ma'āthir al-ināfa fī ma'ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964), 3:133.

²¹⁸⁹ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 169.

²¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Qalāwūn viewed the sultanate as paramount and independent of the caliphate in its temporal and spiritual authority (which was acceptable based on al-Māwardī's understandings of delegation). Thus the investiture deed of Qalāwūn establishes the sultan's dominance over the caliph. See: Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 166, 174.

²¹⁹¹ Anne F. Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reign of Baybars and Qalāwūn," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 104.

²¹⁹² P. M. Holt, "A Chancery Clerk in Medieval Egypt," *English Historical Review* 101, no. 400 (1986): 675-6. See above, p. 70.

²¹⁹³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:173.

Qalāwūn's personal charisma and reputation are at the heart of al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī's document.²¹⁹⁴ As had been the case in the 662/1264 *taqlīd* naming Baraka the heir of Baybars, the 'ahd of al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī does not cite the caliph as the reason for the delegation of power and authority in Egypt and Syria; rather "the reigns of affairs were bestowed upon him for these noble lands, and he was made successor of the sultanate by his father -- God make his *dawla* last forever -- so that the *umma* could see [at the same time, one] sultan and [one] caliph."²¹⁹⁵ Interested as Qalāwūn may have been in establishing dynastic succession, this sentiment was likely an attempt to remove the caliph from traditional legitimating duties and instead focus on concerns of primogeniture. The *tafwīḍ* clause replaces the caliph's name with that of Qalāwūn, who has "issued the order" (just as the caliph had done in Qalāwūn's document) delegating the great sultanate along with full and complete authority to al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī, the holder of the contract (*walī al-'ahd*).²¹⁹⁶ When compared with Baybars's practice concerning the accession of his own son Baraka, we may tentatively conclude that the early Mamluk sultans were happy to set aside the Abbasid caliphate when it came to dynastic aspirations, and al-Māwardī's earlier understanding of the nature of caliphal delegation freed them to do so.

We know that Qalāwūn was uninterested in the ascent of his second son whom he predeceased after famously declining his approval. As a result, modern scholars have come to agree that by overturning his father's policy of containing the caliphate, al-Ashraf Khalīl consciously grasped at Abbasid legitimacy. Thus in the *ḥamdala* of his investiture deed, we find that Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir assumes that the listener/reader is already aware of Khalīl's assumption of power.²¹⁹⁷ As important as Khalīl later made the Abbasid caliphate during his brief reign, reference to the institution is strangely sparse in his investiture deed. There appears to be no clear caliphal clause of delegation and although the document acknowledges that Khalīl honored the institution, it remains unclear as to *who* bestowed the son of Qalāwūn with his authority. The document merely implies that the time to name the sultan was getting late, and the collective counsel of the ruling assembly (*naṣā'ih al-jumhūr*) agreed upon Khalīl.²¹⁹⁸

²¹⁹⁴ Holt, "Succession in the Early Mamluk Sultanate," 146.

²¹⁹⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:174-5. That Qalāwūn and not the Abbasid caliph was the major legitimating force within the document is clear. To exclude the caliph may not have been wrong considering al-Māwardī and others believed that once the caliph delegated his deputy (in this case the sultan Qalāwūn), the deputy became free to assume caliphal prerogatives such as naming his successor. For the text of al-Ṣāliḥ's document, see also: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 185-9.

²¹⁹⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:175.

²¹⁹⁷ Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo: 1985-92), 8:111-2; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:166.

²¹⁹⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:115-6; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:168.

Upon succeeding his elder brother Khalīl in 693/1293, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad twice witnessed his own reign disturbed by the ambitions of his father's amirs. One year later the Maṣṣūrī mamlūk of Mongol origin, al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā seized the sultanate until 696/1296, driving al-Nāṣir Muḥammad into hiding at the outpost of al-Karak. Kitbughā himself was forced from power that same year by another of Qalāwūn's former mamlūks, Ḥusām al-Dīn Lājīn (696-8/1296-8). Investiture deeds for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's dispossessors, both of whom would have desperately required legitimation as usurpers against the house of Qalāwūn, have survived in the pages of al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ*.²¹⁹⁹

After the death of Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir in 692/1292 Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī was instead the author of Kitbughā's *ʿahd* (694/1294) which opened with the claim that the family of the Prophet (i.e. the Abbasids) had imbued the noble contract (*ʿahd sharīf*) with their authority.²²⁰⁰ After stating that the document had been composed on behalf of the Cairo caliph al-Ḥākim to Kitbughā, the *ʿahd*, offering little in the way of a *ḥamdala*, abruptly shifts to the matter of delegation, addressing the would-be sultan with the caveat that concomitant with his new power, was divinely ordained obligation to the caliphate:

God made you sultan to protect the caliph, and through your sovereignty established for the caliph that which was delegated to him from the affairs of God's creation as aid and support. The caliph bestowed you with everything beyond his throne in the interests of Islam upon the thrones and pulpits of all lands. God brought you to the caliph to assist him in everything that [God] has made [the caliph] successor to among the affairs of His slaves in power for your Lord is powerful. To you, God has gathered all the wayward hearts of the *umma* after some had deviated. He has aided you in upholding his imamate with the pious souls (*awliyā*) of your land.²²⁰¹

In what would become an oft-repeated expression in Mamluk deeds involving the caliph, Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī described the delegation of power to Kitbughā, with the observation that “the caliph has now covenanted to [the sultan] everything which is beyond his holy caliphate, and all that which is incumbent in the rulings of his imamate which is founded in Godly piety (*taqwā*).”²²⁰² It is then the duty of the sultan, freshly delegated with Abbasid authority, to establish the symbols of Islamic sovereignty divinely entrusted to him by the caliph. Thus according to the document, with the initiation of the sultanate, God and the caliph al-Ḥākim have delivered the reins of power (*maqālīd*) to Kitbughā along with public and private sovereignty in

²¹⁹⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:46-58; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:39-60.

²²⁰⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:47; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:39.

²²⁰¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:47-8; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:39-40.

²²⁰² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:327, 10:49; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:43; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d.), 397. An oft-repeated proposition in the investiture documents is that Godly piety (*taqwā*) is at the heart of the caliphate, serving the caliph both as a source of guidance and as the basis for his commands. See below, pp. 443-5.

all the lands of Islam, as per the mandates of the Prophet's holy law.²²⁰³ The document implies that the Mamluk sultanate indeed viewed itself as the universal Islamic state of the time.

In much the same way, the investiture document for Lājīn (696/1296) states that the caliph delegates “those requirements of the caliphate of God on His earth” while claiming that the advent of Lājīn has restored blessings to the community. The document characterizes the caliph as swift to yield to God's commandments in all matters delegated to him with respect to the affairs of the faithful.²²⁰⁴

Shortly after the overthrow of Lājīn, reference to al-Ḥākim appeared in one final document, the *‘ahd* written for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (most likely at the behest of the ruling junta of amirs) by the qadi and court scribe Shams al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Qaysarānī (d. 753/1352).²²⁰⁵ The document beseeches the young prince to return to Cairo from exile in al-Karak to assume the sultanate and initiate what was to become his second reign as sultan (698-708/1299-1309).²²⁰⁶

The document begins by assuring the young sultan of his value to the government and his role in preserving order. The document informs al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that control is in his hands, particularly over *jihād* and the enforcement of the Qur’ān and *sunna*.²²⁰⁷ Drawing allusion to God's delegation of prophethood to John the Baptist in the Qur’ān, as well as the trope that authority is hoisted upon the unwilling servant, the *‘ahd* instructs al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to take the Qur’ān in his hand with strength.²²⁰⁸ Elsewhere the document reiterates the delegation with extra emphasis on al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's duty to the caliphate:

The Commander of the Faithful desires victory to be upheld for monotheism (*al-dīn al-ḥanīf*) so he has established you in his position and set you forth among the peoples of obedience and rebellion [to extend and exact] his generosity and revenge. So praise God who returned you to sovereignty [...] and has made you an aid of the caliph in [governing] creation. He made you a strong support for the caliph in the world and raised you first to the sultanate, second to the caliphate, and of the two moons (i.e., the sun and the moon), made you the third.²²⁰⁹

Despite the prestige of having been “hand-picked” by the caliph himself, the claims laid out in the document failed to protect the sultan from a second expulsion by the magnate amirs.

²²⁰³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:49; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:43.

²²⁰⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:58; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:59-60.

²²⁰⁵ Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafādī, *A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998), 1:83-4. See also: Van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid Discourse,” 4-6.

²²⁰⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 3:60.

²²⁰⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:59; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:60-1.

²²⁰⁸ Ibid. The document references verse 19:12 of the Qur’ān, instructing John the Baptist (Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyyā) to “take hold of the book with strength,” and poses it to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as a command for the sultan to take the message (*kitāb*) from the caliph with strength just as John was ordered to hold fast to the biblical scripture (*kitāb*) and prepare himself for accountability on the Day of Judgment.

²²⁰⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:65; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:71.

During the brief decade of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's second sultanate, the caliph al-Ḥākim passed away in 702/1301 and his son Sulaymān al-Mustakfī billāh inherited the family office. With al-Nāṣir Muḥammad expelled to al-Karak in 709/1309, al-Mustakfī had no choice but to recognize the sultanate of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr. In all, two investiture deeds survive from the few months of Baybars's reign; the first at his initial inauguration²²¹⁰ and the second, an eleventh hour declaration of authority meant to influence the people and composed in the face of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's triumphal return to Cairo.²²¹¹

The first investiture deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr concedes that great authority remains invested in the office of the caliph, but necessity urged the selection of another party to carry out the obligation of *jihād*. Careful to ensure that the caliph's chosen surrogate was indeed worthy of the dignity, the document names Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, "the sultan of Islam and the Muslims, master of kings and sultans, victor of the Muḥammadan community, reviver of the Abbasid state, Abū al-Faṭḥ Baybars, Associate of the Commander of the Faithful, [may] God strengthen and protect the caliphate through his abiding and [indeed] has done so."²²¹² The document establishes the primacy of *jihād*, while observing that, incapacitated by crisis, the caliph found himself overextended and unable to oversee his commitments, thereby obliged to delegate authority to Baybars.²²¹³ The document thus explains delegation of power to the sultan as a necessary reality to implement warfare against the caliph's enemies, whether Mongol battalions or resurgent forces loyal to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

With reference to the Qur'ān, before beginning the advisory *waṣīyya* section, the document describes a number of the sultan's duties such as fighting the enemies of religion, constructing mosques and caring for the *dhimmī* population.²²¹⁴ The author then assures listeners/readers that the caliph has completed prayers for

God to make the caliphate an enduring authority in the lineage [of al-'Abbās], and bless Islam and the Muslims with honor by virtue of [the caliph's] station and lineage (*ḥasab wa-nasab*), covenanting to the lofty position of the sultan, everything that is beyond the throne (*sarīr*) of his caliphate and investing [the sultan] with everything invested to [the caliph] from the ordinances (*aḥkām*) of his imamate [...] as well as

²²¹⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:128-35; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:68-75. Ibn Taghrībirdī claims the initial document came from the *inshā'* of the qadī 'Alā' al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir. See: *Manḥal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfi ba'da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1984-93), 6:19.

²²¹¹ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa'īd 'Āshūr (Cairo, 1956-73), 2:1:65-6; Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963-72), 8:263. See also: Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52.

²²¹² Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:130; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:70.

²²¹³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:130-1; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:71.

²²¹⁴ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:132-3; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:72.

everything ascribed to the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful in the regions comprising his imamate.²²¹⁵

On the eve of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's final return to Cairo, Baybars al-Jāshinkīr requested a second investiture deed from al-Mustakfī emphasizing the illegitimacy of hereditary kingship. The resulting document contained a delegation composed in the first person voice of the caliph, used likely for its inherent urgency:

I am pleased with the slave of God Most High, al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Rukn al-Dīn [Baybars al-Jāshinkīr], as my representative in the sovereignty of the Egyptian and Syrian territories, I have set him in place of myself in consideration of his religion, competence, aptness, and because he has pleased me as leader for the faithful. I deposed his predecessor [al-Nāṣir Muḥammad] after I learned that he had stepped down from power. I considered this my duty, and the four qadis concurred in favor of that. Know – may God have mercy upon you - that kingship is without heir (*al-mulk 'aqīm*), and cannot be inherited from predecessor to successor or from a noble ancestor to a peer. I have besought the choice of God most high, and appointed al-Malik al-Muẓaffar as governor over you. Whoever obeys him, obeys me; and whoever disobeys him, disobeys me; and whoever disobeys me, disobeys my cousin Abū al-Qāsim [i.e. Muḥammad] (God's peace and blessings upon him).²²¹⁶

Despite the public involvement of al-Mustakfī, popular demand for the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad outweighed even the orders of the caliph and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr was briefly exiled and then executed. After al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's final reign concluded with his death in 741/1341, a coterie of his amirs shortly installed his son Abū Bakr (741-2/1341) in the name of al-Mustakfī's heir, the caliph Aḥmad al-Ḥākim II. Abū Bakr's investiture deed, succinct in its delegation, merely marks the transfer of power "from one powerful one (the caliph) to another (the sultan)."²²¹⁷

The final document from the Baḥrī period is an *'ahd* for Abū Bakr's brother, the Qalawunid sultan Aḥmad in 742-3/1342. The document begins with reference to verse 31:20 of the Qur'ān and God's perfected blessings upon mankind and bestowal of control in the skies and on the earth.²²¹⁸ Unlike previous documents, there is no use of the caliph as an intermediary between God and mankind and it instead implies that God grants sovereignty and renews the *bay'a* on the necks of the nations.²²¹⁹ Without mention of the Abbasid caliph, the investiture

²²¹⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:132; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:72.

²²¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:263.

²²¹⁷ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:127-8.

²²¹⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:427; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:266. For an abridged copy of the oath sworn to al-Nāṣir Aḥmad by the notable amirs of the time, see: al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:197-9.

²²¹⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:428; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:268. In 742/1342 rival amirs ousted Qawṣūn and invited Aḥmad to Cairo to assume the sultanate. The document reflects the point of view of the amirs, unhappy with Qawṣūn's dominance and rule through the puppet sultan al-Ashraf Kujuk. The document accuses Qawṣūn of wanton destruction during his stewardship and of "wrongly assuming that God selected

document of sultan Aḥmad emphasizes the importance of the *mubāyaʿa* (presumably between the sultan and the people) and references other signs of sovereignty such as consent of the notables, mention in the Friday sermons and on the coinage.²²²⁰

Three sultanic investiture deeds from the Burjī period uphold many of the themes and rhetoric discussed above, as well as similar clauses of delegation. Examples include the 815/1412 investiture deed for al-Muʿayyad Shaykh in the name of the caliph al-Mustaʿīn composed by the *ṣāhib dīwān al-inshāʾ*, Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bārīzī al-Ḥamāwī (d. 823/1420),²²²¹ as well as documents for the sultans al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar and al-Ashraf Barsbāy in the name of that caliph's brother and successor, Dāwūd al-Muʿtaḍid II (r. 816-45/1414-41), composed by Abū Bakr ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī al-Azrārī.

Although al-Mustaʿīn had received the sultanate after the death of Faraj in 815/1412, he relinquished it unhappily to Shaykh. The investiture document for Shaykh cited al-Mustaʿīn as the Commander of the Faithful and caliph of the age who bestowed powers on the new sultan. The religious establishment had attested to the document to appease Shaykh.²²²² Composed by Shaykh's close confidant and *kātib al-sirr*, al-Bārīzī, the *ʾahd* enshrines the formal acclamation

him to inherit the earth." See: P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 121-2; Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 81-5; Jo Van Steenbergen, "The Amir Qawṣūn, Statesman or Courtier? (720-741 AH/1320-1340 AD)," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 3, *Proceedings of the 6th, 7th and 8th International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1997, 1998 and 1999*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenbergen (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 449-466; idem, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341-1382* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 103-4, 116, 124, 130.

²²²⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:430; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 3:273. By the mid-fourteenth century, consent among the Cairo amirs carried significant legitimacy on par with delegation from the Abbasid caliph. See: Holt, "Position and Power," 248; Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 3 (1994): 383; Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 24.

²²²¹ Shaykh appointed Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Bārīzī as *kātib al-sirr* in Ramaḍān 815/December 1412 to replace Faṭḥ Allāh. See: Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr bi-abnāʾ al-ʾumr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969-98), 2:519. For al-Bārīzī's biographical information, see: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:161-2; Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʾ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʾ* (Cairo, 1934-6), 9:137-8. On al-Bārīzī as an agent loyal to Shaykh's interests during the sultanate and deposition of al-Mustaʿīn, see: R. Kevin Jaques, *Authority, Conflict, and the Transmission of Diversity in Medieval Islamic Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 94-7. The role of the Banū al-Bārīzī family -- civilian elites from Ḥamā who dominated the Shāfiʿī qadiship for 120 years beginning in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century and went on to wield influence as bureaucrats in Cairo -- has attracted some scholarly interest. See: Bernadette Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l'administration dans l'état militaire Mamlūk: (IXe/XVe siècle)* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1991), 249-66; Konrad Hirschler, "The Formation of the Civilian Elite in the Syrian Province: The Case of Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Ḥamāh," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 106-8, 124-9.

²²²² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:121. Indeed, al-Qalqashandī's didactic preface to the document overlooks the brief sultanate of al-Mustaʿīn, instead writing that Shaykh came to power on the death of al-Nāṣir Faraj after resolving a brief contest for the sultanate with a rival amir (i.e. Nawrūz).

by elite amirs, qadis, and ‘*ulamā*’, along with the masses, which precedes its *tafwīd* clause of delegation:

The caliph, may God strengthen religion through him, with *baraka* gathered auspiciously (in his right hand), rallied the totality of Islam and the Muslims, uniting [them] on the delegation of authority amongst them and upon the holder of their contract, the one responsible for the noble sultanate and the grand imamate; to you - may God make your sultanate last forever and subordinate the age to you, with the angels as your helpers. The caliph, having sought the best of outcomes [from God] (*istikhāra Allāh*) sets forth this investiture (*taqlīd*) and that which is deemed noble *sunna*.²²²³

Elsewhere al-Bārizī addresses justice and enjoining the good, while informing the new sultan that the Abbasid caliph

covenants to you all that which is beyond the throne of his caliphate, and in everything associated with the ordinances (*aḥkām*) of his imamate. Thus he invests you both in east and west, near and far, land and sea, over smooth and rough terrain, and in all of his sovereignty, lands and henceforth all that which God opens for him by your hand. [It is] a total delegation, a complete investiture, a finished contract and general ascription. [...] It is founded upon Godly piety (*taqwā*) and God’s pleasure.²²²⁴

That delegations of authority were often in reality forced upon the caliph is nowhere more evident than the delegation to Shaykh by the reluctant caliph who gave up the sultanate and was ultimately forced to abandon the Cairo caliphate in favor of his brother al-Mu‘taḍid II. Among the first to receive an investiture document in the name of the latter was al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar.

After having been “selected” by the caliph, “the sultan thus became the protector (*walī*) of this *umma* and God aided him in that which he took over and allowed him to fulfill the conditions of the ‘*ahd* and the *bay‘a*, may God make his sovereignty (*mulk*) last forever.”²²²⁵ A clearer delegation follows with the recognition that the Commander of the Faithful delegates to Ṭaṭar everything God had entrusted to his office including responsibility over lands and worshippers, and then assigned to the sultan everything both “in his hand and beyond his throne,” to which the chief qadis testified and advanced him to the imamate, upon the completion of which, the Muslims shouted “God is great”!²²²⁶ The document then affirms that the caliph has accepted the legal conditions which oversaw the assignment of authority to Ṭaṭar, and declares

²²²³ Ibid., 10:123-4.

²²²⁴ Ibid., 10:124-5. See also: Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:205-7.

²²²⁵ Abū Bakr ibn Hījja, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshā’*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Beirut, 2005), 338.

²²²⁶ Ibid., 339.

that God is merciful upon the one who takes the caliph's place and enables his enjoyment of widespread support.²²²⁷

The final investiture deed, for the sultan Barsbāy, dates to 825/1422 and is preserved in the *inshā'* collection of Ibn Ḥijja. The *tafwīḍ* clause goes beyond a commonplace caliphal delegation, employing the familiar trope that Barsbāy, reluctant to assume leadership, had to be forced by al-Mu'taḍid's *demand* that he take power. The delegation for Barsbāy is noteworthy in its attempt to trace the theoretical sources of caliphal authority:

Our master the caliph urged that which was incumbent upon him from his obligations to God and cast the staff of his selection (*'aṣan ikhtiyārihi*), and discerned the choice of God (*khīrat Allāh*) in the delegation of the affairs of the Muslims to [Barsbāy], honored him thusly, but he refused, so the *imāms* of religion made a fatwa forbidding him to abstain from [taking care of] the interests of the Muslims. [...] So when the breezes of assent blew and veils lifted from the countenance of delegation, the lightning which accompanies dazzling guidance shimmered for our master the caliph and he delegated to our master the aforementioned sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf that which God had entrusted to [the caliph] from the affairs of the Muslims, a divine designation appointing its order (*isnād*) to him and enforcing its obligation, and confirming the validity of this order with the chief qadis of Islam and they ruled upon it with reason. Thus [Barsbāy] was put forth for the imamate, and the Muslims became aware that he was the *imām* of every *mihrāb* and they said "God is great!"²²²⁸

Barsbāy's *tafwīḍ* concludes with the observation that in his bestowal of authority to the sultan, the caliph has strengthened every aspect of faith. As in earlier documents, the caliph delegates everything beyond his throne (i.e. the caliphate itself) to Barsbāy, thereby honoring the sultanate through his wide-encompassing authority, now legally and publicly wielded by the Mamluk sultan.²²²⁹

Finally, it is worth comparing the caliphal delegations of power made to the sultans above with one made to a religious scholar. A document dated 9 Ṣafar 902/17 October 1496, allegedly composed by the caliph al-Mutawakkil II, delegated full powers over the judiciary to the Muslim scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī based solely on caliphal authority. Al-Suyūṭī, well-acquainted with the many caliphal and sultanic investiture deeds that appear in his historical works, encouraged the caliph to name him grand qadi (*qāḍī kabīr*) and likely participated in the composition of the document. The delegation resembles al-Mustanṣir's full delegation of power to Baybars over all the Muslim lands and those yet to be "opened" from infidel control in 659/1261 as well as al-Ḥākim's "total" delegation of power to Qalāwūn in 678/1279:

²²²⁷ Ibid., 340.

²²²⁸ Ibid., 370.

²²²⁹ Ibid.

[The caliph al-Mutawakkil II] delegates to [al-Suyūṭī] rule and judgment over Egypt and the rest of the noble Islamic lands, east and west, and that which God opens for the Muslims from the lands of unbelief; a general and absolute delegation (*tafwīḍan ‘āmmaṁ muṭlaqaṁ*) without condition or exception. The Commander of the Faithful - may God prolong his honor -- delegated to the *shaykh al-Islām* Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn supervisory (*al-naẓar*) over the affairs of the qadis, so that he may appoint those among them who are righteous, and depose those who are not. In this, the Commander of the Faithful - may God bring glory to his reign - models his ancestor the Commander of the Faithful Hārūn al-Rashīd billāh [who delegated similar authority] to the great *imām* al-Layth bin Sa’d. May God renew His *baraka* upon the Commander of the Faithful and the rest of the Muslims.²²³⁰

There is no question that the sultans, delegated with the powers and authority of the Abbasid caliphate, are the true gravitational center of these documents. The investiture deed itself became an important symbol in Mamluk ceremonial, as it enshrined the caliph’s transfer of authority to the sultan, thereby energizing the Mamluk polity as a classical Islamic state and the true heir of the Baghdad Abbasid caliphate. As such, the regime in Cairo upheld the norms of the holy law and preserved the integrity of the community’s pledge to God and the Prophet.²²³¹ Preserving the unity of their subjects against outside enemies was important to the Mamluk program, to which the residual power and symbolic authority of the Abbasid caliphate was central.

II. Caliphal Succession Contracts (‘*ahd*’ or ‘*aqd walī al-‘ahd*’)

In the context of succession documents, the term ‘*ahd*’ (which proves quite versatile), refers to the contract between the Abbasid caliph and his designated successor. Al-Qalqashandī considered many such documents preserved in the *Ṣubḥ* as formal appointments.²²³² It is no coincidence that the term ‘*ahd*’ was used to denote both the document enshrining the caliphal delegation to the sultan, as well as the caliph’s selection of his own successor to the caliphate, as the ‘*uhūd*’ were reserved to refer to contracts of appointment for the highest office holders in the Mamluk sultanate.²²³³

Dominique Sourdel traced the origin of the caliphal practice of leaving a written designation for the presumptive heir to the reign of the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (65-

²²³⁰ ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-‘ābidīn bi-tarjamat Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Aṣr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Damascus, 1998), 173. See also: Elizabeth M. Sertain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 92-3.

²²³¹ Lev, “Symbiotic Relations,” 10-4.

²²³² Björkman, “Diplomatic.

²²³³ Ibid.

86/685-705).²²³⁴ As a title, *walī al-‘ahd* referred to the successor of a caliph or other ruler by virtue of a contract which had been concluded between the heir, his delegator, and the community.²²³⁵ In the classical caliphate, the contract which named the caliph’s successor took precedence even over the *bay‘a* ceremony, and in many cases early caliphs listed more than one heir. As they had in the previous epoch, heirs to the caliphate in the Mamluk period tended to be sons of the reigning caliph, though there was no formalized means of succession and nothing barred brothers or cousins from assuming the caliphal dignity.²²³⁶ Position as heir to the caliphate was not without prestige and al-Qalqashandī lists several honorifics associated with the title of the *walī al-‘ahd*, such as “noble excellence” (*al-jānib al-sharīf*),²²³⁷ the “exalted master” (*al-sayyid al-jalīl*) and the “armory of religion” (*dhakhīrat al-dīn*).²²³⁸ A caliph’s selection was often ratified by a council of the regime’s notables including the sultan, qadis, and important amirs.²²³⁹

The present investigation benefits from the fifth chapter (*maqāla*) of the *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā*, that concerns documents of appointment for public offices (*wilāyāt*) and includes al-Qalqashandī’s discussion of the theoretical position of the *bay‘a*, in which the author discusses

²²³⁴ Sourdel, “*Khalīfah*.”

²²³⁵ Authorities made little attempt to disguise the caliphate’s true hereditary nature and while earlier jurists had stipulated that the electoral community be comprised of scholars and *mujtahids*, it was more often the case that only the inner circle of Mamluk military elite and token members of the religious class were on hand to ratify caliphal succession. See: Crone, *God’s Rule*, 227-8.

²²³⁶ Sourdel, “*Khalīfah*.” In the Mamluk period, however, a nearly equal number of Abbasid sons inherited the caliphate from their fathers as brothers bequeathed it to one another. The most notable period (808-859/1406-55) began in the early fifteenth century when the caliphate passed between five brothers, all sons of al-Mutawakkil I: al-Musta‘īn, al-Mu‘taḍid II, al-Mustakfī II, al-Qā’im, and al-Mustanjid. In the event that the caliph failed to leave a successor, the matter fell to the amirs to name a candidate from the Abbasid house, usually the most senior member. On succession practices among the Abbasids of Cairo, see: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 17-20; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr: al-ḥāla al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya fī ‘ahdihā bi-wajhin khāṣṣ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1947), 85; Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Tarkhān, *Miṣr fī ‘aṣr dawlat al-mamālīk al-jarākisa* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1960), 54, 58. Our greatest resource on Abbasid succession practices in the later Mamluk period is Ibn Iyās, who demonstrated that caliphal succession was closely observed by Mamluk society. Even sultans such as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad IV and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī apparently had their own ideas on how Abbasid succession ought to work. See: Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i‘ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982-4), 3:380, 4:139-40, 323-4. On caliphal succession more generally, see: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn* (Beirut: Dar al-Arqam, 2001), 242-50; W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought: The Basic Concepts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), 35-40; Crone, *God’s Rule*, 226-8.

²²³⁷ On the various uses of *jānib* or *janāb* to refer to the “nobility” of the heir to the caliphate (as well as others), see: Ibn Fadlallāh al-‘Umarī, *al-Ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf*, ed. Samir al-Droubi (Karak, 1992), 15-8; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Nāṣir al-Jaysh, *Kitāb tathqīf al-ta’rīf bi-al-muṣṭalah al-sharīf*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Cairo, 1987), 8, 187-9; Broadbridge, “Diplomatic Conventions,” 108.

²²³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:123, 9:263.

²²³⁹ In some instances when the caliph left no heir, it became the prerogative of the sultan or the ruling amirs to name the next caliph from the pool of Abbasid candidates. See: Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 19; Tarkhān, *Miṣr*, 54; Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 12.

popular motifs used in the standardization of caliphal *bay'a* documents.²²⁴⁰ Based on intimate knowledge of classical investiture deeds and caliphal documents from his own period, al-Qalqashandī instructs aspiring chancery secretaries to use the full name of the caliph, discuss the circumstances which led to the *bay'a* ceremony, discuss the nobility and necessity of the office, praise the candidate and mention his suitability for office above and beyond all contemporaries, mention that the choice had been made by the electoral community and witnessed by important officials, and last of all, affirm that the candidate had accepted the contract freely without rival claimants. All that ensured that the new *imām* would be rightfully owed the trust and obedience of the entire community. Al-Qalqashandī went on to advise future scribes-in-training that condolences should be offered if the previous caliph died, and that removal of an incumbent *imām* was unlawful without good reason. Finally, there must be mention of the reigning sultan performing the *bay'a*, as well as prominent notables in attendance, as well as the great quality of the oath itself.²²⁴¹ These requirements suggest that many of the documents were unique reflections of specific historical circumstances. In what remains of the current chapter, we will see that many Mamluk period chancery clerks indeed strove to include these points in their rhetoric on the *bay'a* and the caliphate.

A. Succession and Perpetuation of the Abbasid Caliphate

Caliphal succession contracts, by their nature relating to the perpetuation of the Abbasid caliphate, demonstrate the socio-political importance attached to the institution. The idea of preserving and strengthening the succession was crucial to the scribal secretaries who took pains to assure their listeners/readers that the latest caliphal succession had been legal (*sharī'*), sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), and explicitly the product of an outgoing caliph's willful participation.²²⁴² In reality, however, the Mamluk court discussed suitable successors when an incumbent caliph was thought to be near death and gave special consideration to an Abbasid candidate who had been previously

²²⁴⁰ For an overview of the fifth *maqāla*, see: *Subḥ*, 1:24-6. For al-Qalqashandī's discussion of the historical *bay'a* see: *Subḥ*, 9:273-347. See also al-'Umarī and Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh's earlier discussion on the mandatory nature of caliphal *bay'a*: Ibn Nāẓir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 138-40. On popular motifs used in *bay'a* documents see: *Subḥ*, 9:276-9. For al-Qalqashandī's description of fourteenth century investiture ceremonies involving the Abbasid caliphate, see: *Subḥ*, 3:276-7. For Mamluk *bay'a* ceremonies and oaths of allegiance, see: al-'Umarī, *Ta'rīf*, 209-15; al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 13:216-20.

²²⁴¹ Urbain Vermeulen, "La *bay'a* califale dans le *Subḥ* d'al-Qalqashandī: L'aspect théorique," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, Vol. 2, *Proceedings of the 4th and 5th International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1995 and 1996*, ed. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 297-300.

²²⁴² Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8), 2:64-5, 66. For a broader anthropological discussion of various types of succession, see: *Succession to High Office*, Cambridge Papers in Social Anthropology, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 1-56.

named successor in an *'ahd*, but the final decision on caliphal succession remained in the hands of the sultan.²²⁴³

The first such contract issued for a Cairo caliph is attributed to al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh and composed for his heir Sulaymān al-Mustakfī in late Jumādā I 701/January 1302.²²⁴⁴ The document, if it is authentic, attests to al-Mustakfī's aptitude and fitness for office, claiming that the soundness of the contract led to the divine gathering of Islamic authority for bestowal upon the new caliph coupled with the powerful *baraka* of his noble ancestors to assist with imposing restraint on tyrants.²²⁴⁵ By praising al-Ḥākim as "cousin of the master of the prophets" and "carrier of God's mercy, strength, and his own virtuous life example (*ḥusn sīratihi*) to the gardens of paradise," the document attempts to vouchsafe the caliphal succession based on the idea that the caliph and his son, in their knowledge and demeanor, were students who sat at the feet of the prophets, companions, and rightly guided caliphs.²²⁴⁶

When time came for al-Mustakfī to name his own successor in the 730/1330s, he initially chose his son Baraka al-Mustawthiq, named in a partial, perhaps model *walī al-'ahd* document preserved by al-Qalqashandī.²²⁴⁷ The *ḥamdala* begins by indicating God's interest in supporting the Abbasid caliphate by consistently supplying it with the best fathers and sons, and ensuring that its abiding authority remained in the lineage.²²⁴⁸ God's protection and preservation of the caliphal succession is considered evident even in ominous times, as certain as "light comes from darkness."²²⁴⁹

Events in the wake of al-Mustakfī's 740/1340 death in exile in Upper Egypt gave rise to one of the most striking and revealing Abbasid documents from the early Mamluk period. After the unpopular caliphate of al-Wāthiq billāh, a caliph purportedly chosen by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as a calculated snub to the *'ahd* contract concluded by the caliph al-Mustakfī, the *'ulamā'* ultimately secured the succession of the latter's selected heir, al-Ḥākim II. It was not until al-Ḥākim II came to Cairo to receive welcome at court by the circle of amirs protecting the young sultan Abū Bakr, that the chancery secretary Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī, a vociferous advocate for

²²⁴³ 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk wa-rusūmuhum fī Miṣr: dirāsa shāmila lil-nuzum al-siyāsiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣriyya, 1979), 1:39; Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 1:12.

²²⁴⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:67. It is difficult to ascertain the authenticity of this document given that I have not found it in any source earlier than al-Suyūṭī, who has reproduced it nearly two centuries after its alleged composition.

²²⁴⁵ Ibid., 2:64-5.

²²⁴⁶ Ibid., 2:65.

²²⁴⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:389-90; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:337-8.

²²⁴⁸ Ibid., 9:389; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:337.

²²⁴⁹ Ibid.

the ouster of al-Wāthiq, composed a new and highly celebratory deed of appointment.²²⁵⁰ A joyful vindication that the caliphate had resumed and the harmony of the universe restored, this document reflects the ways in which a courtier and chief of the chancery, delighted to be rid of a court pariah, envisaged the caliphate through a lens of unbridled idealism.

Al-‘Umarī who had himself toiled to rehabilitate the tarnished reputation of al-Mustakfī and his family at court and in the contract for the son, and in his mind “rightful heir,” wrote that God had selected the late caliph as an honored servant, relocated him to Cairo from Baghdad,²²⁵¹ and rewarded him for an exemplary life by placing him amongst excellent company and recipients of divine favor such as prophets, trustworthy companions, martyrs, and the pious.²²⁵²

Later succession documents justified a caliph’s selection of his son based on the candidate’s hypothetical fulfillment of the classical requirements of the imamate: knowledge of religion, probity, generosity, good intentions, and a general suitability for office, as was the case when the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid I named his son al-Mutawakkil heir in 763/1362. The author of the document establishes that the caliphal transfer has been concluded in accordance with *sharī‘a*, praying that God champion and support the holy law through Islamic authority.²²⁵³

In a document dating to roughly 800/1397-8, several years before his death, al-Mutawakkil bestowed the caliphate upon his son al-Musta‘īn and thus “established through [his son] the well-spring (‘*ayn*) of the Abbasid caliphate as he had done with his father [before him].”²²⁵⁴ Through the affirmation of his son’s qualities the document preserves the legality of the succession and defends the Abbasid legacy. We are told that the caliph al-Mutawakkil chose his son al-Musta‘īn because he had suitable characteristics for the caliphate and that it was his mercy to the community that such a young man, in truth the *only* acceptable candidate, became designated as the heir apparent.²²⁵⁵

²²⁵⁰ Numerous discrepancies persist among versions of the document preserved by al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ* (9:320-31) and a later version copied and edited by al-Suyūṭī both in his *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’* (392-9) and in the *Husn al-muḥāḍara* (2:70-9). In my translations of excerpts from the document, I have attempted fidelity to the *Ṣubḥ* version which appears to be fuller and closer to the time of the original composition (al-Qalqashandī himself having been a close associate and student of the composer, al-‘Umarī), while also noting al-Suyūṭī’s divergences wherever interesting or appropriate.

²²⁵¹ Al-Mustakfī was in fact born in Cairo according to most Mamluk sources. See: al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:375-6; Khalīl ibn Ayyub al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-al-wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 15:349; idem, *A’yān*, 2:419; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:416.

²²⁵² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:322-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 394. This “collection” of praiseworthy people may be a reference to the ḥadīth in which Muḥammad, while standing on Mount Uhud with Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān, experienced a tremor beneath his feet and exclaimed, “Be still, O Uhud, for upon you there is a prophet, a truthful one (*al-ṣiddīq*), and two martyrs.” See: *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, 5:57:24.

²²⁵³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:83.

²²⁵⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:370; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:340-1. The Arabic word ‘*ayn*’ can also be translated as “soul” or “eye.”

²²⁵⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:374; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:347.

After al-Musta‘īn’s acceptance of the family office and implied entry into the pantheon of his excellent ancestors, the document attests to the strength of the succession by likening the caliphs to the prophets and employing the leitmotif of equating Abbasid descent to a tree of the best roots developing into fine branches bearing great quantities of fruit. Al-Musta‘īn, as incoming caliph who has absorbed all the goodness and knowledge of his father, is described as having been “created with [his father’s] noble temperament, benevolent ethics (*akhlāquhu al-karīma*), and having obtained the caliph’s good manners which nourished him in the cradle (*fī mahdihi*).²²⁵⁶ He took from the good tools (*ḥusn al-adawāt*) which had been transmitted from his father and grandfather, from that which was happily imprinted in his polished mind, engraved in his intellect and from the time of his childhood, intermingled within his blood and flesh, until they became second nature. His behavior will remain to pass [among society] for some time, for he has a natural instinct (*al-gharīzī*) both original and determined (*aşlan thābitan*), and as such his roots are strong and from them grows a [strong] branch. Nevertheless, the [incumbent] caliph continues to advise him [for the sake of] *baraka*, and explains to him [those things] which, God willing, he should be holding fast to. When a man is commanded to enjoin good, it is desirable, and a man must advise his son, as God Most High has said (in Qur’ān, 2:132), “Abraham gave instruction to his sons and so did Jacob.”²²⁵⁷

Finding the succession unchallenged, the caliph repeatedly prayed to God for the best outcome (*istikhāra*) and reached the epiphany that the only satisfactory recourse was to name his son to the caliphate. Al-Mutawakkil thus named al-Musta‘īn his successor over the *umma* and invested him with the holy caliphate “in the fashion of the past caliphs and the basis of his predecessors among the rightly-guided *imāms* and delegated to him that which he had of its ordinances and requirements, foundations, and nobilities, from covenant and decree (*‘ahd wa-waṣāya*), deposition and delegation.”²²⁵⁸

To further strengthen the legitimacy of the succession and to provide rationale for keeping the caliphate within a select household, the document reasons that growing up in the household of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, who had “directed the face of the caliphate to its *qibla*,” made the young al-Musta‘īn the supreme choice for the office. Indeed, the Abbasid prince had been “suckled at the breast of the caliphate and reared in her chambers; prophecy [mandated that] he belonged to her and thus she pressed him to her bosom; and *why should she not* cling to his beauty, hang from the trails of his robe, and covet nearness to him, loving him excessively,

²²⁵⁶ *Mahd* in this context can refer to a child’s cradle, or more generally, to childhood or the period of princely rearment.

²²⁵⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:375; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:349-50.

²²⁵⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:374; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:348-9.

inclining towards his sociability and tempting him, sufficient as he was for all of her conditions?”²²⁵⁹

The implication is that the caliphate, described here poetically as a living, motherly, sentient being, *chose* al-Musta‘īn, even longing for him to “give the *khuṭba*,” a metaphor describing the caliph’s traditional ascent to the *minbar*. The author appears to appreciate that “caliphate” was a concept that went far beyond the man given the office. It also embodied the roles of the sultanate, the judiciary, and the hierarchy of amirs, with the ensemble depicted as a single free entity, guided by divine justice, self-aware, and eternally coveting the best man to occupy its office.²²⁶⁰ This further emphasizes the point that many in the Mamluk court saw the caliphate and the man who held it as different entities -- one charged with the defense and upkeep of the other.

Defending the integrity of the succession proved equally important in several later documents that linked mismanagement of the caliphate to social chaos. Some forty-five years later, when al-Musta‘īn’s brother and successor the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II left the caliphate to their brother al-Mustakfī II in 845/1441, the succession document proclaimed that, if care of the government had been left to anyone else, trouble would have unavoidably fallen upon the electoral community (*ahl al-ḥall wa-al-‘aqd*).²²⁶¹ Thus in his final act of defending the caliphate by selecting the best successor, al-Mu‘taḍid II chose with alacrity to spare the Mamluk government the burden of having to choose a caliph. The document informs us that his selection of al-Mustakfī II left his mind at ease knowing that one worthy of advising the sultan and his circle, would assume office. While unanimous consent among the *umma* was perhaps gratuitous, those privy to the decision ought to encourage others to support it.²²⁶²

In the case of succession documents written for the incoming caliph and attributed to his outgoing predecessor, one would rightly expect the documents in question to contain florid praise for both the Abbasid family and their position in Mamluk society. Like the investiture deeds for the sultans, *‘ahd* documents for the caliphal succession emphasized the major themes of protecting Islam and Muslims and upholding the *sharī‘a*.²²⁶³ Focused on the incumbent caliph, his successor, and occasionally the sultan who protected them, caliphal succession deeds of the Mamluk period centered on the figure of the Commander of the Faithful, his investiture in the

²²⁵⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:373; idem, *Ma‘āthir*, 3:346.

²²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²²⁶¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 409.

²²⁶² Ibid., 410.

²²⁶³ Mamluk ideology was partially based on the defense of Muslim society (which included the caliphate) against Mongols and Crusaders. Notions of protection formed a key part of the Mamluk legitimating ideology examined by Anne Broadbridge. See: *Kingship and Ideology*, 15-6.

capital, the legacy of his position, his ties to natural order, and sought to define his theoretical place in the hierarchy of contemporary society. The documents demonstrated, in the context of Mamluk ceremonial, that the caliphate continued to be properly upheld and its integrity preserved under Mamluk supervision. While the *ḥamdala* and *tafwīḍ* closely resembled those of sultanic investiture deeds, the caliphal succession documents ventured to present an unbroken Abbasid caliphate steeped in tradition and closely watched by various sectors of Mamluk society.

III. Other Documents Alluding to Caliphal Authority

Mamluk chancery workers treated Abbasid authority with the same ceremonial reverence in letters pertaining to domestic affairs and in issues involving relatively distant clients, as they did in affairs of (caliphal or sultanic) succession. A letter, issued in 708/1308-9 by the Mamluk chancery to the Rasulid leader al-Mu'ayyad Ḥizabr al-Dīn Dāwūd (696-721/1296-1321) in the name of the caliph al-Mustakfī sought to reprimand the ruler of Yemen and remind him of Cairo's hegemony.²²⁶⁴ In all likelihood the letter, though written in the caliph's voice, was largely the product of a chancery team urged by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who, as Urbain Vermeulen suggests, was perhaps anxious to exert authority in a theatre that had escaped the attentions of his magnates Salār and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr.²²⁶⁵

Quickly establishing that he had invested the Mamluk sultan with authority, the caliph, in the document, declared that success in the world and interests of the afterlife were elevated by caliphal delegation that enabled the sultan to publicize the traditional symbols of Islamic sovereignty such as minting coins and naming the caliph and sultan in the *khuṭba*.²²⁶⁶ The caliph claims to have chosen the sultan because of his familiarity with the Muslim provinces and expert fiscal management of the empire.²²⁶⁷ Indeed, the Rasulid court is made aware that it is al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who is "the best guide and organizer of the lands," with whom true power and the interests of the empire reside.²²⁶⁸

The *Ṣubḥ* also preserves a Shawwāl 813/February 1411 investiture deed in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Musta'īn presented in Damascus to representatives of the sultan of Gujarāt,

²²⁶⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda*, 396-9; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:152-8; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:421-6; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:256-64. For Ibn Faḍlallāh al-Umarī's scribal advice on how to address letters to Yemen (which includes a template document addressed to al-Mu'ayyad Dāwūd) see: *Ta'rīf*, 27, 102-3.

²²⁶⁵ According to Vermeulen, it is possible that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, having been stripped of power by Salār and Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, wished to exert independent rule in Yemen (a place which had not been closely controlled by the amirs) and appealed to caliphal authority in that land. The letter provides us with an understanding of how the sultan (or perhaps his chancery) understood his own access to the Abbasid caliphate. See: "Une lettre du Calife," 365, 370-1.

²²⁶⁶ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:152; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:422; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:258.

²²⁶⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:154; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:423; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:259-60.

²²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Muzaffar Shāh (810-4/1407-11).²²⁶⁹ The document provides a view into the delegation of caliphal authority to non-Mamluk rulers. Like the earlier delegation to Qalāwūn by al-Ḥākim, the transfer of power concluded for the sultan of Delhi by al-Mustaʿīn is “full, total, and complete” in all remaining lands of India along with its regions, ports, lands and armies, in all matters of its subjects, patrons, lesser rulers, governors, and qadis far and wide. The document states that the ‘*ahd*’ is covenanted through the caliph al-Mustaʿīn, God’s slave and cousin of the Prophet.²²⁷⁰

At least two documents invoke the caliphate in domestic affairs unrelated to sultanic investiture. The first involves the caliphal authority of al-Ḥākim II in a dispute over the use of crossbows (*rumāt al-bunduq*) in Syria in the 740/1340s. The petition appears in a section of the fourth chapter of the *Ṣubḥ* on correspondence and letters (*al-mukātabāt*) with various members of the civilian and military personnel that present the proper etiquette illustrating how petitioners must address the reigning rulers of Egypt.²²⁷¹ The document, apparently composed by al-ʿUmarī, cites a continuing use of crossbows despite an earlier writ demanding that they be abolished in the name of the caliph.²²⁷²

The petition, according to protocol, blesses the Mamluk chancery with a number of epithets including *imāmī* and *ḥākimī*. This indicates that documents depending on the authority of the Abbasid caliph must emanate from the “noble *dīwān*,” thereby making the chancery a formal extension of the caliph’s authority.²²⁷³ It also addresses the failure of a certain Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn al-

²²⁶⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:129-34 (see also: Ibn Hījja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 428-34). By the early fifteenth century, Mamluk investiture deeds involving the Abbasid caliphate were routinely issued to sultans in Delhi. Al-Qalqashandī makes note of the document’s rarity, describing it as the only surviving investiture deed issued by a Cairo caliph to a foreign king. On Abbasid investiture deeds issued to the rulers of India during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see: Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam: History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 108-16; Yāsir ʿAbd al-Jawād al-Mashhadānī, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-Miṣriyya-al-Hindiyya fī al-ʿaṣr al-mamlūkī: dirāsa fī al-jawānib al-siyāsiyya wa-al-ḥaḍārīyya* (Egypt: al-Maktab al-ʿArabī lil-Maʿārif, 2015), 46-56.

²²⁷⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:129.

²²⁷¹ Ibid., 7:119-34. On the processing of petitions by the *kātib al-sirr* and the *maẓālim* court, see: Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 63-73.

²²⁷² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130-4; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:324-31. The precise reasons for the crossbow ban in Damascus are unclear, though it is helpful to recall pope Innocent II’s 1163 ban on the weapon in Europe. Fearing that the crossbow made it easy for lay people or peasants to kill fully armored knights, the pope denounced use of the weapon by Christians against their co-religionists. The Mamluk military class, unlike European nobility, received training in the use of composite bows, as well as lances and swords. Nevertheless, rogue amirs in Syria or bands of peasants using crossbows would have raised concerns for the ruling regime based in Cairo. I thank Adam Ali for this observation.

²²⁷³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:324. In the early thirteenth century, the government of Baghdad had styled itself the High Diwan (*dīwān ʿazīz*) implying that the sultan’s power, at its very source, was akin to that of the caliph. See: al-ʿUmarī, *Taʾrīf*, 6-14; Ibn Nāṣir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 7-8; Barthold, “Caliph and Sultan,” 133.

Ḥimsī, and quite a few of his associates, to comply with an official order forbidding crossbow use in Syria.²²⁷⁴

The petitioners “kiss the ground of the sublime gate” of the caliphal chancery and take refuge with its position, which through its proximity to the caliph, enjoys a similarly close relationship to the religious legitimacy of the Ka‘ba.²²⁷⁵ Al-‘Umarī appears to chastise the crossbowmen for being in breach of a ruling “strengthened and aided by the opinion of the *imām* al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh,” cousin of the Prophet,²²⁷⁶ to which, at least initially, the offending party had shown some deference and even prayed for the Commander of the Faithful whose rulings “increased their happiness.”²²⁷⁷ The document had been read “in every place of hearing” and was understood to be “that which God had ruled upon [through] the speech (*lisān*) of the caliph al-Ḥākim.”²²⁷⁸

The second document involves the sanction of a domestic office in Shawwāl 822/October-November 1419, when Shaykh named Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Bārīzī orator and manager of the library (*khazīn al-kutub*) of his newly constructed Mu‘ayyadiyya mosque (*al-jāmi al-jadīd bi-miṣr*) during al-Bārīzī’s tenure as *kātib al-sirr* (815-23/1413-20) making him overseer of the building in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II.²²⁷⁹ The investiture document composed by Ibn Ḥijja, affirms that authority resides in the *umma*, and that an office holder need not fear the collective wrath of the community of believers lest “he tread on the carpet of obedience in their mosques.”²²⁸⁰

After fulsome praise for al-Bārīzī, whose family al-Sakhāwī identified as the descendants of the Prophet’s companion ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣaḥābī,²²⁸¹ the document sets about the task of linking the esteemed *kātib al-sirr* to Abbasid prestige as “the chosen pillar (*al-rukn al-sāmī*) in the

²²⁷⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:324.

²²⁷⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130-1; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:325. The link between the Abbasid caliphate and the shrines of the holy cities of the Ḥijāz appears in other documents as well. The investiture deed for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad likens the caliph’s selection of the sultan to the divine blessings bestowed on a pilgrim or visitor to the Ka‘ba or the Prophet’s mosque in Medina (*Ṣubḥ*, 10:66; *Ma’āthir*, 3:71).

²²⁷⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:131; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:325-6.

²²⁷⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:133; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:330.

²²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²²⁷⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 3:194-8; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 73-5; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:91. See also: Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration*, 251; Amalia Levanoni, “Who Were the ‘Salt of the Earth’ in Fifteenth-Century Egypt?,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 66-7. Al-Bārīzī was named as overseer of Shaykh’s mosque, although it must be noted that, “*al-jāmi‘ al-jadīd*” is a name more frequently associated with the great mosque constructed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. On the mosque, see: *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum. Première partie. Égypte*. Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire t. 19 fasc. 3 (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1979), 335-41. On the duties of the *khazīn al-kutub*, see: Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 253-5.

²²⁸⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 3:195; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 74.

²²⁸¹ Martel-Thoumian, *Les civils et l’administration*, 249.

foundations of [the caliph's] noble house, the one firmly planted to raise his Abbasid banner so that it might provide shade to one with its extensive shadow, observing with the eye of felicity that which is in our most amazing lineage, and the Muhammadan secret (*al-sirr al-Muḥammadī*) remains to Banū 'Abbās in full."²²⁸² For its part, the document lauds al-Bārizī for his service to Islam, notably for causing the *masjid* to flourish by creating an atmosphere of calm tranquility within its walls.²²⁸³ Al-Bārizī and his worthiness for the position are the true focus of the document, but the piece itself indicates that Mamluk court culture considered it acceptable to use the Abbasid caliphate to honor state dignitaries other than the Mamluk sultan.²²⁸⁴

IV. *Khuṭbas*

Donald Little referred to the transcribed versions of several sermons of the caliph al-Ḥākim (along with treaties and other diplomatic scripts) as "internal documents" embedded within historical text.²²⁸⁵ The Mamluk sultans Baybars and al-Ashraf Khalīl commissioned al-Ḥākim to address members of the Mamluk elite at the citadel in 662/1263 and 691/1291-2 respectively, and on both occasions, the caliph delivered the same *khuṭba*.²²⁸⁶ Focused on themes of *jihād* and defense, the original *khuṭba* opens with the description of the Abbasid house, supported and defended by Baybars.²²⁸⁷ Like many of the investiture documents, the *khuṭba* includes praise for the Abbasid house and the virtues of the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās, who joins the four Rāshidūn caliphs as an archetype of high merit.²²⁸⁸ The caliph's homily stresses the imamate itself as an obligation of Islam in the same breath with *jihād* as the Commander reminded the Faithful of Mongol atrocities against the people of Baghdad, which he himself had

²²⁸² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 3:196; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 74.

²²⁸³ Ibid.

²²⁸⁴ This is also evident from the numerous funerals for notables in which the caliphs actively participate or attended as honored guests.

²²⁸⁵ Little, "Documents in Mamluk Studies," 6-7. Indeed, the *khuṭbas* were created for everyday religious life and left behind as text preserved in regnal histories and chronicles. On the social significance of the Friday *khuṭba* in general, see: Jonathan P. Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 12-4.

²²⁸⁶ For the caliphal sermon for Baybars see: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 143-5; for al-Ashraf Khalīl, see: *Alṭāf*, 8-10. It is unlikely that the text of the *khuṭba* was comprised of the caliph's own words. Slightly later Mamluk sources identify the original 662/1263 *khuṭba* as a work attributed to the *inshā'* of the qadi Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Maqdisī. See: Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Ta'rīkh ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'ihī wa-wafayāt al-akābir wa-al-a'yān min abnā'ih*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 1998), 1:56; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, 51:57; Maḥmūd al-'Aynī, *Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān: 'aṣr salāfīn al-mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 3:87. See also: Nasser Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture: Monuments, Culture and Politics in Medieval Egypt and Syria* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 6.

²²⁸⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 143.

²²⁸⁸ Ibid., 142.

survived.²²⁸⁹ The Mamluk sultan and the importance of his support was a cornerstone of the speech, and the caliph emphasized that Baybars had protected and secured the victory of the imamate, scattered infidel armies and arranged for the *bay'a* of a new caliph.²²⁹⁰ The importance of *jihād* is paramount in the original recitation of the *khutba* to Mamluk amirs, dignitaries, and emissaries from Berke Khān of the Golden Horde, some years after the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt.²²⁹¹ The sultan is again praised as the conductor of holy war and the pillar of faith and the world (*rukn al-dunyā wa-al-dīn*). Baybars's interest in the affairs of the Abbasid caliphate moved him to set the imamate on secure footing, and the caliph claims that the Abbasid dynasty has thus "secured numerous soldiers."²²⁹²

Al-Ashraf Khalīl also commissioned a series of fresh *khutbas* from the caliph in 691/1292 to be read at the citadel and at his father's tomb to drum up morale for his movements against Armenian and Mongol positions. After praising the sultan, the first half of the only surviving *khutba* states that *jihād* is an obligation upon the believers.²²⁹³ The words of the caliph portray holy war as an eternal struggle between good and evil with spiritual rewards that awaited the Mamluk military elite.²²⁹⁴

Likely addressing his remarks to a politically savvy audience of Mamluk amirs (many of whom may have had designs on the sultanate), the caliph did not promise booty or earthly rewards. Words of piety and religious obligation may have been easier to hear from the caliph as opposed to al-Ashraf al-Khalīl, the son of their master.²²⁹⁵ This *khutba* presents an image of the ideal caliph for the Mamluk period, one who summons the believers to God's pleasure through fighting enemies of the faith. However, despite the meager amount of evidence available, it is clear that a universal messenger such as the Abbasid caliph might be listened to with more admiration than a sultan with dubious claims to kingship who many in the hall may have been scheming to thwart or replace.

²²⁸⁹ Ibid., 143.

²²⁹⁰ Ibid., 144.

²²⁹¹ Heidemann describes the *khutba* as clearly shaped by the political intentions of Baybars, particularly his need to be an equal ally of Berke Khan. See: *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 164-6. Al-Hākim repeated the *khutba* in 691/1292 prior to the departure of al-Ashraf Khalīl's troops to attack the Armenian position at Qal'at al-Rūm as a stepping stone to Mongol territory and perhaps Baghdad itself. The repetition of the *khutba* may have been an effort to remind listeners of the threat posed by the Ilkhanids, or to encourage an invasion of Baghdad, thus realizing the promise of the era of Baybars. See: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 47.

²²⁹² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 144.

²²⁹³ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 12; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 48.

²²⁹⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 13.

²²⁹⁵ Ibid.

The second part of the *khuṭba* includes the requisite praise for the Prophet, his family, and companions before evoking the Abbasid mystique and the symbol of al-‘Abbās as “the one who prayed for rain, face turned towards the clouds (*al-mustasqā bi-wajhhi al-ghamām*),” followed by al-Ḥākim’s communal prayer to God:

O Lord, grant me gratitude for the blessing which you have bestowed upon me and upon my ancestors. Answer my prayer that seeks to do good for Islam, for myself, the sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf [Khalīl] the most glorious lord, salvation of the world and religion (*ṣalāḥ al-dunyā wa-al-dīn*), master of kings and sultans, king of the earth and sultan of the world, Abū Faṭḥ al-Khalīl. Lord, grant him influence over the planets and make him king wherever he goes, [...] bring down upon him that assistance which opens the doors of the kingdoms of the earth saying “come on in,” (*hayta lak*) [...] and through him make the land of Islam a place of peace [filled with] *minbars* of the caliphate [...] Make his army victorious and fulfill for him his promise and satisfy his father al-Malik al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn] who battled the unbelievers in his *jihād*.²²⁹⁶

The prayer of the Abbasid caliph, complete with its elliptical statements, was no doubt well-suited for its audience at the citadel. The astrological propitiousness of the hour of departure for battle remained an important concern throughout the span of the Mamluk sultanate and it is only natural that the *khuṭba* of the caliph, one of the chief spiritual authorities in the land, would touch upon it in a public address.²²⁹⁷ Again this provides an image of what the Mamluks wished their caliph to be: to some degree a diviner (or shaman?) leading the government and its military support to the best outcome, or else an astrologer, magus, or Sufi advisor, many of whom were similarly called upon to select the best and most cosmically auspicious dates for military engagements.²²⁹⁸

V. Inscriptions and Coinage

The former Mamluk domains are well known for the epigraphy of the period.²²⁹⁹ Inscriptions on new and restored buildings serve historians as important documents in their own right. Two important inscription inventories supplement our study of Abbasid documents, the

²²⁹⁶ Ibid., 14.

²²⁹⁷ See, for example, Ibn al-Dawādārī’s discussion of the astrology and prophecies which anointed the sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad: *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi‘ al-ghurar* (Cairo, 1960–92), 8:271-6; or Ibn Taghrībirdī’s listing of the important astrological conjunctions at the advent of the sultan Barqūq: *Nujūm*, 12:222.

²²⁹⁸ The sultan Faraj left for his final battle with the Syrian amirs at an auspicious moment chosen for him by his Sufi advisor Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn ibn Zuqā’a. So confident in the *shaykh*’s promise of victory was Faraj, that he committed the fatal blunder of leaving part of his forces at Raydāniyya. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:198; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 13:136.

²²⁹⁹ For a recent survey of Mamluk epigraphical studies, see: Carine Juvin, “Mamluk Inscriptions,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 211-23.

Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum (CIA) and the *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (RCEA). Coins of the Mamluk period also reflect a strong involvement with the Abbasid caliphate in its earliest years, followed by a later period of disuse beginning in the early fourteenth century. The scope of the current chapter limits discussion to Mamluk inscriptions and coins that contribute to a titular repertoire involving the Abbasid caliphate.

A. Inscriptions

After Baybars had installed two successive Abbasid princes in his capital, caliphal protocol figured prominently in his inscriptions and coinage.²³⁰⁰ Based on its consistency, the most important title he used seems to have been “Associate of the Commander of the Faithful” (*qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*) which the Mamluk sultan employed heavily in his titular in inscriptions in important locations in Cairo and throughout Syria, including the tomb of the early Muslim general and companion of the Prophet, Khālīd ibn al-Walīd in Ḥims,²³⁰¹ the mosque of al-Azhar in Cairo,²³⁰² Baybars's own mosque complex in that city,²³⁰³ the *maqām* Nabī Mūsā near Jericho,²³⁰⁴ and the citadel of Damascus.²³⁰⁵ Reuven Amitai has divided the titles of Baybars into three categories, those which show him as a *jihād* warrior, those that present him as a just and powerful Muslim ruler, and those that reflect his power and majesty. In light of its legitimating potential, *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn* is arguably the most important title, perhaps because it was placed immediately after the sultan's proper name and was found in many of his inscriptions and coins.²³⁰⁶ Another important title used by Baybars in the inscription at the tomb of Moses (Nabī Mūsā) is “he who commanded the taking of the *bay'a* to two caliphs” (*al-āmīr bi-bay'at al-khalīfatayn*).²³⁰⁷ Certainly the latter was a title of distinction, though one free of the notion of being an “associate” of the caliph. Qalāwūn continued the use of the *qasīm* title at his *madrasa* and added it to his restorations at the Ḥisn al-Akrād fortress.²³⁰⁸ Qalāwūn completed the work on Baybars's mausoleum in Damascus and had an inscription declaring that the project had reached

²³⁰⁰ Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans*, 85-106.

²³⁰¹ *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1931-91), 12, no. 4556 (henceforth cited as RCEA).

²³⁰² Ibid., 12, no. 4562.

²³⁰³ Ibid., 12, no. 4563 and 4586.

²³⁰⁴ Ibid., 12, no. 4612. See also: Reuven Amitai, “Some Remarks on the Inscription of Baybars at Maqām Nabī Musa,” in *Mamlūks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London, 2006), 47-51.

²³⁰⁵ Ibid., 12, no. 4690; Ḥasan Al-Bāshā, *al-Alqāb al-Islāmīyya fī al-ta'rīkh wa-al-wathā'iq wa-al-athār* (Cairo, 1978), 206; Denise Aigle, “Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām. Une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir,” *Studia Islamica* 97 (2003): 63. Baybars also announced himself as *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*.

²³⁰⁶ Amitai, “Some Remarks,” 50-1; Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks: XIIIe - XVIe siècle; une expérience du pouvoir dans l'Islam médiéval* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014), 107.

²³⁰⁷ Ibid., 47-51.

²³⁰⁸ RCEA, 12, no. 4623, 13, nos. 4844, 4845, 4846, 4848, 4852, and 4857.

its termination thanks to “al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, Associate of the Commander of the Faithful, may God extend his kingdom.”²³⁰⁹ Al-Ashraf Khalīl likewise continued to use *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn*, a title that he inscribed with his name at the citadel of Aleppo.²³¹⁰ In addition, Khalīl also introduced a different title, notably on one of the bands of the citadel of Aleppo which names him “restorer of the noble Abbasid state, the defender of the Muḥammadan community, may his victory be glorious!”²³¹¹ Insofar as monument inscriptions go, the *qasīm*/associate title appears to have fallen out of vogue after the death of Khalīl. Few other inscriptions involving the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo survived save for the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn’s proclamation outside of Gaza in 815/1412.²³¹² It is unfortunate that the inscriptions in the Abbasid mausoleum in Cairo offer little beyond the names, regnal titles and dates of death of the nearly two dozen interred, only two of whom appear to have been caliphs in Cairo.²³¹³

B. Coinage and Numismatic Evidence

As it had in monument inscriptions, *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn* retained importance on coins struck by the same early Bahārī sultans, Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalīl. Beginning in 659/1261, Baybars named the caliphs on the reverse of his coins and first took the title “*al-sulṭān al-malik*.”²³¹⁴ On at least one coin struck in 659/1261, Baybars had the sultan titles on one side, and the full name and *laqab/kunya* of the caliph on the other.²³¹⁵ Some dirhams from 659-61/1261-3 also include the title *qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn* directly after the name of Baybars.²³¹⁶ In the early days, both the names of al-Mustaṣṣir and then al-Ḥākim appeared on the reverse of coins that named Baybars.²³¹⁷ It is interesting that both full titles are given in some cases: the

²³⁰⁹ Ibid., 13, no. 4884. Qalāwūn used the *qasīm* title in a few other inscriptions including the grand mosque of Ba‘labak (4824), the *markab* of the Citadel (4858), the mosque of Acre (4886), and the Ashrafi madrasa (4895).

²³¹⁰ Ibid., 13, no. 4957.

²³¹¹ Ibid., 13, no. 4959.

²³¹² L. A. Mayer, “A Decree of the Caliph al-Musta‘īn Billāh,” *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 11 (1945): 27-9; Maḥmūd ‘Alī ‘Aṭā Allāh, *Niyābat Ghazza fī al-‘ahd al-Mamlūkī* (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1986), 236-7; M. M. Sadek, *Die mamlukische Architektur der Stadt Gaza* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1991), 98-9.

²³¹³ Only two caliphs appear to be buried within the structure itself; the other Abbasids are the sons and grandsons of al-Ḥākim and al-Mustakfī, many of whom were small children. Nevertheless, many of the children received courtesy-titles, Abbasid regnal names, and recognition as “*imāms*” even in death.

²³¹⁴ Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans*, 85.

²³¹⁵ Ibid., 89, 91. The coins identify the caliph as: “*al-imām al-Mustaṣṣir billāh Abū al-Qasīm Aḥmad ibn al-Imām al-Zāhir amīr al-mu’minīn*.”

²³¹⁶ Ibid., 87-8, 92, 94, 97, 99-101, 105.

²³¹⁷ Ibid., 85. The name of al-Ḥākim only appeared on silver and copper coins, not on the gold as al-Mustaṣṣir’s had.

caliph as *amīr al-mu'minīn* on one side, and Baybars as *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn* on the other.²³¹⁸ Baybars did not always make use of the *qasīm* title and later coins replaced it with his lion heraldry. While the caliph's full name was eventually removed from the coins, Baybars appears to have named himself *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn* as late as 666/1267 and 668/1269.²³¹⁹ The two sons of Baybars likewise maintained the title popularized by their father on their own coins during their brief reigns.²³²⁰ Qalāwūn struck the title on his coins and inscriptions without ever naming the reigning caliph.²³²¹ Al-Ashraf Khalīl's coins also match the pretensions of his inscriptions, naming himself the victor or helper (*nāṣir*) of the Muslim *umma* and the reviver of the Abbasid state (*muḥyī al-dawla al-'abbāsiyya*).²³²² The usurpers of Khalīl's younger brother al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Kitbughā in 694/1294-5 and Baybars al-Jashnakir in 709/1309 similarly, employed the *qasīm* title in their coinage.²³²³ According to Balog, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself did not appear to make use of the title until his third reign in which several undated silver dirhams name him "Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Nāṣir al-Dunyā wa-al-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*."²³²⁴

During the period of rule by Qalawunid princes and their magnates, the title seems to have vanished from the coinage never to return. If the title fell out of vogue, it may have been because most of the Qalawunids were puppet sultans in the hands of the ruling amirs supplying the latter with enough legitimacy in the changing political climate of the Mamluk circle as earlier powerful sultans had been able to wield with the initial Abbasid caliphs. For many of the subsequent rulers until Barqūq, it was more important to be identified as a descendant of Qalāwūn, who himself had been known widely as *qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*. It is noteworthy that the religious formula proclaiming the Islamic profession of faith remained constant on the backs of most Mamluk coins after the caliph's name was removed. This may have been sufficient to remind the population that the Mamluks and, of course, their religious scholars were upholding the *sharī'a*, protecting the caliph, and maintaining the classical image of Arabo-Islamic government.

²³¹⁸ Ibid., 92 (nos. 44 and 46).

²³¹⁹ Ibid., 97.

²³²⁰ Ibid., 107-11.

²³²¹ Ibid., 112, 114. Some numismatic evidence suggests that Qalāwūn named himself commander of the faithful on coinage. An anomalous coin minted in Damascus in 678 names Qalāwūn the *amīr al-mu'minīn*, perhaps due to a lack of space for "*qasīm*." Likewise an undated silver *dirham* names al-Nāṣir Muḥammad "son of the *amīr al-mu'minīn*." See: Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans*, 141, no. 191.

²³²² Ibid., 120-2.

²³²³ Ibid., 127-8 (Kitbughā), 135-6 (Baybars al-Jāshinkīr).

²³²⁴ Ibid., 141.

As for the coins of later Mamluk vassals such as the Jalayrids, Qaramanids, Artuqids, Eretnayids, and early Ottomans, none, save for the Jalayrid Sultan Aḥmad, minted coins hinting at fealty to the Abbasid caliph of Cairo.²³²⁵ While the remaining Burjī Circassian sultans do not appear to have used caliphal protocols in their coinage or inscriptions, it is perhaps worth mentioning that during his brief “sultanate,” the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn had time enough to mint coins naming himself “*amīr al-mu‘minīn*” and “*al-imām al-a‘ẓam*.”²³²⁶

C. “Associate of the Commander of the Faithful” (*qasīm amīr al-mu‘minīn*)

The widely disseminated sultanic epithet, “associate” or “co-partner” of the caliph, affirmed that the caliph invested the sultan with the “affairs of the lands and subjects and made him organizer of creation (*wakala ilayhi tadbīr al-khalq*) and made him his associate (*qasīm*) in enacting rights and delegated to him the rest of the matters [of rule] and entrusted him with bringing prosperity to the public.”²³²⁷ This naturally left the caliphate with a role not easily defined. As a designation, *qasīm amīr al-mu‘minīn*, one of the loftiest additions to the Commander of the Faithful title, meant that the sultan or ruler shared in the caliph’s authority and sovereignty, or at the very least, that the caliph looked upon him as an equal in power.²³²⁸ An early usage of the title dates to the Buyid ruler of Fārs and Iraq, Abī Nāṣr al-Malik al-Raḥīm (440-7/1048-56). Although the title may have been unknown to the Fatimids, it was used by the Seljuqs and the Seljuqs of Rūm.²³²⁹ By resurrecting the title, or bringing it to his territory, Baybars may well have appreciated the gravitas of his watershed restoration of the caliphate in Cairo.²³³⁰

²³²⁵ Sultan Aḥmad, perhaps amidst fears of Temūr, struck coins as the *mughūth amīr al-mu‘minīn* implying his vassal status to the Mamluk sultan Barqūq. See: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 149-50, notes 53 and 56.

²³²⁶ In addition to Balog’s remarks (296-8), coinage minted in the name of the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn has received some attention, see: Lutz Ilisch, “Inedita des ‘Abbasidenkalifen al-Musta‘īn bi’llah aus Syrischen Munzstätten,” *Münstersche Numismatische Zeitung* (Dec. 1982): 39-41; Warren C. Shultz, “The Silver Coinage of the Mamluk Caliph and Sultan al-Musta‘īn bi’llah (815/1412),” in *The 2nd Simone Assemani Symposium on Islamic Coins*, ed. Bruno Callegher and Arianna D’Ottone (Trieste: Polymnia, Numismatica antica e medievale 1, 2010), 210-9.

²³²⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir, *Rawḍ*, 141-2.

²³²⁸ Aigle, “Les inscriptions de Baybars,” 64.

²³²⁹ Al-Bāshā, *Alqāb*, 204-5. Seljuq sultans also made use of other titles suggesting fealty to the Commander of the Faithful such as Alp Arslan (*nāṣir amīr al-mu‘minīn*) and Malikshah (*yamīn amīr al-mu‘minīn*). On Ayyubid understandings of the sultanate, see: R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), 365-9. According to ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Mājid, a number of similar titles were used in the Ayyubid period: *mawlā amīr al-mu‘minīn*, *khādim amīr al-mu‘minīn*, and *ṣāhib amīr al-mu‘minīn*. See: *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:35.

²³³⁰ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 174.

In reality, the power of the sultan eclipsed that of the Abbasid caliph and had replaced it in most practical respects. Nevertheless, titles involving the caliphate in this period may have been indicative of more than mere propaganda. Combined with the ideology expressed in the *‘ahd* of Qalāwūn, the sultan may have been interested in setting up his office as a seat of absolute power independent from the caliphate, though one which may have continued to share aspects of its authority.²³³¹ “Associate of the Commander of the Faithful” was a title used with some regularity after it had been standardized in the inscriptions and coins of Baybars and subsequently appeared in the inscriptions and coins of a number of sultans.²³³²

II. ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTS

A. Theoretical Position of the Caliph in Mamluk Society

In light of the opinions of Mamluk jurists and historians explored in the previous chapters, it is clear that the Abbasid caliphs, divested of genuine power, played only a marginal role in politics and day-to-day administration. However, the enduring importance and authority of the caliphate, at least as the sultan and his amirs likely understood it, revealed itself in the realm of Mamluk ceremonial, in which documents associated with the Abbasid caliphate became the most appropriate place for their composers to extol the virtues of Islam’s signature leadership institution.

Investiture deeds and succession contracts, composed by representatives of the bureaucratic class (as formal members of Mamluk chancery culture and often litterateurs), offer a genre-specific view of the theoretical position of the Abbasid caliphate in politics, ceremonial, and society at large. Many of the documents contain lengthy *ḥamdala* sections which, in the context of bestowing praise on God and the Prophet, offered opportunities to examine Abbasid legitimacy alongside conceptual representations of the caliphate’s authority in society.

1. The Caliph as Perpetual Conduit to the Prophet’s Family

Following praise for the family and companions of Muḥammad, many document stylists transitioned into praise for al-‘Abbās and his descendants.²³³³ In a marriage contract (*ṣadāq*)

²³³¹ Ibid., 174-5.

²³³² Al-Bāshā, *Alqāb*, 206.

²³³³ The document of al-Ashraf Khalīl for example praises al-‘Abbās and his descendants “whose ranks produced caliphs to govern creation.” See: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:112; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:166-7.

between Sāra,²³³⁴ the daughter of the caliph al-Mutawakkil and an amir identified as Zayn al-Dīn Ṣadaqa al-Sayfī Azdamur, al-Qalqashandī reiterated the unique supremacy of the caliphal lineage compared to other notable families, whether from the *‘ulamā’* or the military class: simple marriage into the Abbasid family brought one the highest of honor and distinction.²³³⁵ In one of his own compositions, the author of the *Ṣubḥ* praises God who “brought forth the Hashimite garden from the best components, and [allowed] the branching of the Abbasid well-spring [...] God made the house of the caliphate special, and limited strength and honor to this family, dwarfing the prestige of the great kings of the past, present, or future. We praise God who fortified the families [of the caliphate] with [other] families of good standing (*al-ḥasab*).”²³³⁶ For al-Qalqashandī, the deeds of the glorious Abbasid past entitled their latter-day descendants in Cairo to enjoy an inimitable station (*siyāda*) and position (*makāna*) of honor²³³⁷ for themselves as well as their necessarily virtuous children, of whom it was said, “None can adequately reward for their goodness in this [plane of] existence (*wujūd*); none can find faults, flaws, or speak ill of them, for there is scarcely enough to bestow upon them for all [the righteous deeds] that [their ancestors] did.”²³³⁸

The cult of the Prophet dominated Sunni piety in Mamluk Egypt, and the idea of Muḥammad’s intercession for the Muslim community was important and undisputed.²³³⁹ One premise of the documents was the ability of the caliph’s lineage to connect administrators instantaneously to the legacy of the Prophet. After all, it was the caliph’s status as “cousin of the Prophet” which defined his right in Mamluk society.²³⁴⁰ Indeed, the *taqlīd* for Baybars blesses the family of the Prophet (*ālihi*) “whose noble qualities are everlasting and without perish.”²³⁴¹ When

²³³⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 14:319-21. The *ṣadāq* was often the term which referred to the marriage contract, though it also can imply the marriage gift pledged at the time of the contract. See: Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12, 13, 53-9.

²³³⁵ Al-Qalqashandī also praises the Prophet for allowing his virtuous companions to marry his daughters rather than insist on political marriages with kings or other foreign rulers. Later in the document, al-Qalqashandī notes that in the past, the children of kings and caliphs always sought to intermarry with the Abbasid family in the hope of attaching themselves to the pinnacle of Islamic nobility. People of religion (*ahl al-dīn*) flocked to the virtuous Abbasids (*ahl al-faql*) to find suitable matches for their offspring.

²³³⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 14:319.

²³³⁷ The contract frequently alludes to the past and current honor of the Abbasid family with words such as *karam*, *majd*, *‘izza*, *sharaf*, and *al-ināfa*.

²³³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 14:320. There is another *ṣadāq* document for one of the daughters of the Abbasid caliph al-Ḥākim (or al-Ḥākim II?) preserved in the *shurūṭ* manual of Shams al-Dīn al-Asyūfī, *Jawāhir al-‘uqūd wa-mu’īn al-quḍāt wa-al-muwaqqi’īn wa-al-shuhūd*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqrī (Cairo, 1955), 2:53-6.

²³³⁹ Shaun E. Marmon, “The Quality of Mercy: Intercession in Mamluk Society,” *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998): 126-8.

²³⁴⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:390; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:338.

²³⁴¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 102-3.

it came time for the specifications of his investiture deed, Baybars was said to have believed “that prophetic qualities were perpetually passed on among the Abbasid offspring.”²³⁴²

In the 741-2/1341 investiture deed of al-Ḥākim II, al-ʿUmarī believed the caliph to be a member of a noble house that enjoyed “sovereignty until the Day of Judgment, [and whose] magnificence puts clouds to shame [...]”²³⁴³ In caliphal succession documents, kinship is a key theme which emphasized traditions of the Prophet’s calls for amity and friendship among family members, and that the best affinity resided among his own family and associates, making them “the most just creatures in matters of ruling.”²³⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥijja’s succession deed for al-Muʿtaḍid II acknowledges the present-day Abbasid as the rightly guided caliph of the age whose noble house draws both the mercy and blessings of God, and employs the motif of the House of al-ʿAbbās as budding foliage:

Praise be to God for extending the branches of this noble tree which purified the honor and sweetened its vegetation, it gives shade to the Muslims and this noble *ʿahd* reaps its fruits.²³⁴⁵

Ibn Ḥijja’s *ʿahd* for the sultan Barsbāy alludes to the caliph’s preeminence as a scion of the Quraysh and declares that “if the ages had claimed the existence of another *imām* of his caliber, they would be lying.” Nevertheless, the scribe cautions against overconfidence in the assumption that the caliph’s noble ancestry was sufficient on its own, and that while righteous families often enjoyed higher status and lineage, all would be equals on the Day of Judgment, even those as lofty as the Abbasid caliphs.²³⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥijja reprises the tree leitmotif in the investiture deed of Barsbāy by claiming that blessings came from the house of the Commander of the Faithful, who all in Cairo must pay heed to, as “it has been proven that [the caliph’s] house and speech owe to his pure ancestors, for he is the successor of the caliphs and there is no dispute in his nobility which has done good and has grown in the earth. Verily he is from the house which resides in the garden and of the tree whose roots are solid and whose branches are in the heavens.”²³⁴⁷

The mainstream cultural understanding among religious scholars of the Mamluk period was that God honored the Abbasid branch of the Prophet’s family, and that the caliph was seen as

²³⁴² Lev, “Symbiotic Relations,” 11.

²³⁴³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:324; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 394.

²³⁴⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:63. Likewise, Ibn Ḥijja described al-Muʿtaḍid II as one who stood for God’s truth, from a line of ancestors who had cared about the rights of God (*ḥuqūq Allāh*) while others sat idle. See: Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 368.

²³⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 336.

²³⁴⁶ Ibid., 368.

²³⁴⁷ Ibid., 370.

the “pure remnant” (*baqiyyat al-ṭāhira*) of the house of al-‘Abbās.²³⁴⁸ In the deed for his investiture over India, Muẓaffar Shāh is informed that God deliberately placed one family [the Abbasids] in distinction and honor above all others and sent them to witness, spread good news, warn and call others to God, acting as a guiding light by His leave. The family, free from blemishes and stains, is described by verse 33:33 of the Qur’ān, “[Rather] God wants to keep filth away from you, from the house and make you pure.”²³⁴⁹ God granted the Abbasids knowledge of the caliphate and favored them by sending them forth as *imāms*. The Abbasids are the “first house” for the caliphate and it remained God’s will that the caliphs be from the “watering place” (*siqāya*) of al-‘Abbās, an allusion to the former task of the Hashimite clan and later the Prophet’s uncle of distributing water or “watering” pilgrims who came to the Ḥijāz, and poetically evoking it as a spring from which his descendants and relatives drink up distinguished honor.²³⁵⁰

The caliph’s symbolic position linked the lofty character of an already respected office holder such as the qadi and *kātib al-sirr* of al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh, Muḥammad al-Bārizī with the honor of the Prophet’s family by way of a Quranic insinuation that he shares “protected status” and should be counted among those who give “preference [to the *muhājirūn* immigrants from Mecca] over themselves even though they are impoverished.”²³⁵¹ In the investiture deed naming al-Bārizī overseer of Shaykh’s mosque complex, Ibn Ḥijja likens the *kātib al-sirr* to the family of al-‘Abbās “whose tree has solid roots and its branches in the heavens [... which is] the furthest extent of nobility, so whoever takes ḥadīth from [the Abbasids] is successful in [conducting] good oversight and [managing the] bounty of the *masjid*, for verily their house and ḥadīth are without dispute.”²³⁵² The implication is that al-Bārizī is as fit to hold his position as mosque overseer as the caliph is for the caliphate. His speech is eloquent and hearing his advice, wisdom or ḥadīth narration is on par with hearing it from the descendants of al-‘Abbās with their indisputable Islamic credentials.²³⁵³

The Prophet’s uncle al-‘Abbās, as the originating founder of the font of *baraka* embodied by his living descendants, is celebrated in the documents.²³⁵⁴ Maḥmūd al-Ḥalabī likens the

²³⁴⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 393.

²³⁴⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:130; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 428-9.

²³⁵⁰ Ibid.

²³⁵¹ Qur’ān, 59:9.

²³⁵² Ibn Ḥijja revisits the analogy of roots and branches in his praise of the caliphal ‘*ahd*’ for al-Bārizī, praising God for extending the branches of (the ‘*ahd*’s) roots until it shades the *umma*, using Abū al-Faṭḥ (al-Mu’taḍid II) as the opener of the doors of goodness, and the liberator of the gates of knowledge. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 3:197-8; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 75.

²³⁵³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ma’āthir*, 3:195; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 74. In his chronicle, Ibn Taghrībirdī vouched for al-Bārizī as a skilled orator capable of reducing his congregation to tears, see: *Nujūm*, 14:96-7.

²³⁵⁴ Most documents present the contemporary caliphate as being strengthened by the ability to attract and absorb the powerful *baraka* of the descendants of al-‘Abbās which, embodied in the form of the caliph, will

Prophet's uncle to a fatherly figure with the maxim, "a man's uncle is the twin of his father."²³⁵⁵ The deed of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad praised God's selection of "the Commander of the Faithful from among the descendants of the uncle of his Prophet, al-ʿAbbās, and [who] chose his house from the best of the *umma*. [...] God permitted privilege and favor to reside in his line, and through it, protected Islamic lands [...so that...] hands [clenched tight] became white in thanks."²³⁵⁶

In the context of praise for the Prophet, another recurring theme of the documents involves the notion of Muḥammad's delegation of authority to al-ʿAbbās combined with subsequent caliphal authority, a divine blessing, assigned to his descendants:

May God be pleased with [the Prophet's] uncle al-ʿAbbās, grandfather of the caliph and his ancestors the guided *imāms* who passed down the caliphate from one great one to another and were named with their titles and epithets on the *minbars*. God put the caliph in charge of the interests of the public (*jumhūr*) and contracted to him the *bayʿa* on the necks of the believers and profoundly increased them in divine light. He has inherited the imamate from his pure ancestors, the best of the *umma* [...] God's favor is complete upon him as it was completed upon his ancestors before him – God Most High acknowledged that [the caliph] is chosen to take power over the lands and to rule over regions and peoples.²³⁵⁷

Through various Prophetic traditions and verses of the Qurʾān, the documents underscore the place of al-ʿAbbās and his family by virtue of their connection to the family of the Prophet. Muḥammad was alleged to have told his uncle "God opened the affair [of prophethood and Islamic leadership] with me and He will end it with your son,"²³⁵⁸ as well as telling his grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib [i.e., al-ʿAbbās's father], that he was "the father of the caliphs."²³⁵⁹ The caliphate is presented as a reward to the line of al-ʿAbbās who had brought comfort to his nephew at a time of great strain, by delivering news that the Anṣār of Medina had concluded a *mubāyaʿa* with the Prophet. Al-ʿAbbās then received the good news that the caliphate would remain in his lineage to his profound delight.²³⁶⁰ The *tafwīd* clause in the *ʿahd* for al-Zāhir Ṭaṭar praises al-ʿAbbās as the uncle of the caliph, declaring that the former had received good news that he would never be a source of embarrassment to his descendants.²³⁶¹

make the *umma* of Muḥammad (perhaps represented here by the Mamluk elite) victorious against tyrants (like the Mongols after Wādī al-Khāzindār). See: Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:66.

²³⁵⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:48; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:40-1.

²³⁵⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:61; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:63-5.

²³⁵⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:129-30; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:70.

²³⁵⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:130-1; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 429.

²³⁵⁹ Ibid.

²³⁶⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:63.

²³⁶¹ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 338.

The name of al-‘Abbās is particularly germane to the succession of the Cairo caliph al-Musta‘īn who had been named after the dynasty’s eponymous ancestor. Al-Musta‘īn, having been the only caliph to be named al-‘Abbās, was thus blessed by God, raised to the loftiest degree, and distinguished by having “his ancestor al-‘Abbās in his name and *kunya*, thereby making him successful with something with which none of the forty-six caliphs before him had succeeded.”²³⁶² For his part, the caliph is described as profoundly appreciative of his noble lineage and the good roots and noble branches from which he himself had sprung.²³⁶³

2. The Fall and Rise of the Caliphate in History and Society

The early investiture deeds for Baybars and Qalāwūn acknowledge that recent historical events had degraded the traditional standing of the Abbasid caliphate and thus it fell to the Mamluk sultan to restore it to its rightful place. The triumphant restoration of Islam’s most sacred office provided the Mamluk sultanate with its crowning achievement and with it, the chance to aggrandize the sultan’s own position. Any disturbance in the continuity of the caliphate provided the sultan with the opportunity to intercede and enter history as a hero and an agent of the divine. To that effect, the investiture deed of Baybars explains that

whereas [so many] noble qualities are particular to the [lofty] position of al-Malik al-Zāhir [Baybars...] (may God increase his loftiness!) the noble, prophetic, *imāmī*, *mustanṣirī* [*dīwān*] (may God honor its power!) emphasizes his noble destiny and acknowledges his favor [...] because he has established the Abbasid dynasty/state (*dawla*) after the evil affections of time crippled it and eliminated its beauties and beneficence. [Baybars] dispatched evil to its fate, and has [instead] extinguished the tragedy that had attacked [the Abbasid caliphate] with the tyranny of an enraged person.²³⁶⁴

For his service to the caliphate, and through his restoration of order to the confused state of spiritual and worldly affairs, Baybars was rewarded with the authority of the sultanate. Though the *taqlīd* of Baybars also lauds his excellence in *jihād*,²³⁶⁵ the document takes pains to underline the Mamluk sultan’s yearning for God’s reward (*thawāb*) as the prime motivation behind his support and generosity in favor of the Abbasid caliph:

Upon the advent of the caliph, [Baybars] allotted compassion and affection, and in his desire for God’s reward, made known [his] unconcealed loyalty. He has revealed

²³⁶² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:370; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:202, 3:340-1. Both of the Cairo caliphs Aḥmad al-Ḥākim (661-701/1262-1302) and his grandson Aḥmad al-Ḥākim II (741-53/1341-53), had the *kunya* Abū al-‘Abbās, while al-Musta‘īn’s given name was al-‘Abbās.

²³⁶³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:371; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:342-3.

²³⁶⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 103.

²³⁶⁵ Ibid., 107-9.

his interest in the matter of the *bay'a*, [an affair which] if any other [than Baybars] had desired it, he would be denied [...] God has preserved this good deed so that it weighs heavily on the scale of his reward and lightens [the severity of] his reckoning on the Day of Judgment.²³⁶⁶

It is hardly happenstance that the *ḥamdala* of Qalāwūn's *'ahd* opens with three separate segments that after praising God, quickly comment on the status of the revived caliphate. The first section highlights Qalāwūn's connection to *jihād* by virtue of the Quranic verse of the sword (*āyat al-sayf*),²³⁶⁷ implying that his reign will see a pursuit of holy warfare more fervent than even that of the Ayyubids.²³⁶⁸ The next two sections address the Abbasid caliphate and demonstrate its enduring significance.

We have elsewhere described what appears to be Qalāwūn's ambivalence towards the Abbasid caliphate, though the condition and prestige of the institution remained a concern of his chancery. Indeed, his investiture deed recognized that God had reversed the fortunes of the Abbasid caliphate and "allowed it to smile after it had been made to frown and restored its beautiful characteristics after they had grown sickly and emaciated, after the dispersal [of caliphal unity by the Mongols] every land of Islam became greater for [the Abbasid caliphate] than Baghdad (*kullu dār Islām lahā a'ẓamu min dār al-salām*)."²³⁶⁹ The precedent set by Baybars's past treatment of the caliphate may have contributed to a ceremonial imperative that ensured that Qalāwūn, who had seized control from the sons of his predecessor, would require the power attached to the Abbasid descendant in his capital.

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's composition again praises God, who made the Abbasid caliphate the vanquisher of its foes. After having sunken to profound depths for a time, the "broken pieces" of the caliphate were restored, amidst widespread fear that nothing of it would remain in the eyes and hearts of the people but the distant legacy and symbolism of its iconic black banners.²³⁷⁰

None of the successors to Baybars could boast of being the first to install an Abbasid in Cairo; *they* could only claim to be a protector, preserver, or perpetuator of the caliphate. Indeed Qalāwūn's document makes clear that part of the sultan's role included raising the caliph and projecting his authority throughout the sultanate. In the third section of the *ḥamdala*, after praise and prayers for the Prophet, the *'ahd* praises God for presenting Qalāwūn to the community, and for establishing the Abbasid caliphate in his time with victory or assistance (playing on his regnal

²³⁶⁶ Ibid., 103-4.

²³⁶⁷ Qur'ān, 9:5.

²³⁶⁸ These ideas have already been examined at length, see: Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 169.

²³⁶⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 10:116; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:130. The statement seems to affirm Cairo's new status as caliphal hearth.

²³⁷⁰ Ibid.

title al-Manṣūr), as it had been established in the recent past.²³⁷¹ It is at the inauguration of Qalāwūn's reign that God

who brought life to [the caliphate's] landmarks after they had been obliterated and all vestiges made extinct, chose to announce [the caliphate's] call (*da'wa*) [from the *minbars*], and gathered to it all that which had been gathered before [...] and dispersed its authority throughout the lands of the exalted realm with the goodness of a sharp and resolute sword [i.e. Qalāwūn's]. Obedience [to the caliphate] in the hearts [of the people] intermingled with its mention upon their tongues, and how not while al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn] is the ruler (*al-ḥākim*)?²³⁷²

Having established that the Abbasid caliphate is inextricably linked to the sultanate, the document shifts its focus to Qalāwūn, notably his ability and duty to protect the realm. The later *'ahd* of his son al-Ashraf Khalīl does not appear to make use of caliphal delegation, though it revisits the motifs of honor restored to the caliphate.²³⁷³

3. The Caliphate in Religion: God and the 'Ulamā'

Emphasizing the religious role of the caliphate was an obvious way to supplement the deficit left in the classical position. For mainstream Muslims, the symbolic caliph, who only held religious significance by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, represented the contemporary incarnation of the Prophet's original community of believers.²³⁷⁴ With most discussion of the caliphate's position confined to the *ḥamdala* of investiture documents, it follows that mention of the caliphate was a necessary appendage to the central theme of praising God.

Because God was believed to have chosen the caliph by way of divine election, many documents conceived a special relationship between the two. The *ḥamdala* of the succession contract for al-Mustakfī states that by preserving the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, God ensured that the line of Qurayshī *imāms* would abide forever, commanding the obedience and allegiance of the people. After establishing that the authority of God and the Prophet must be firmly obeyed, the *ḥamdala* states that God's prerogative includes assigning power to whomever He sees fit. The

²³⁷¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:117; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:131.

²³⁷² Ibid. This appears to be a subtle but significant play on words. Qalāwūn is the reason that the caliphate continues to enjoy authority in Mamluk lands. It is not a coincidence that Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir chose to describe Qalāwūn's station as ruler with the *laqab* of the sitting Abbasid caliph. This wordplay may be a commentary on the notion that al-Manṣūr is al-Ḥākim, or at the very least that he has subsumed all of the latter's significance and is now preparing to distance his authority from the caliphate.

²³⁷³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:115; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:167. The document mentions the cleansing of the besmirched countenance of the caliphate, and its re-establishment based on important precedents.

²³⁷⁴ Crone, *God's Rule*, 221. Indeed the Abbasid caliph of Cairo is better understood not as the "head of Islam," but as the "head of the Muslims" to whom all Muslims theoretically owed obedience. See: Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:33.

document alludes to the death of al-Mustakfī's father and states that until his final days, the caliph had feared God, ever-mindful of his secret actions and private relationship with his creator.²³⁷⁵

In 741-2/1341, al-'Umarī viewed the son of al-Mustakfī, al-Ḥākim II, as exceedingly fit for office which likely inspired his explanation of the theoretical position of the caliph in relation to God and the sultan:

[The caliph is one who] only ascends the lower portion of the *minbar* in the presence of the sultan of his age, to speak of him as protector and to establish him in his standing. [The caliph] does not sit atop the throne of the caliphate, without it being known that his satisfactory character (*mustakfīhu*) was not confounded nor his judgment (*ḥākimuhu*) absent. He is the deputy (*nā'ib*) of God on His earth, and the one who stands in the position of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), is his caliph, his cousin, the follower of his virtuous deeds, and the inheritor of his knowledge. Our master (*sayyid*) and *mawla*, God's slave and intimate, "Aḥmad Abū al-'Abbās" al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh [II], may God Most High strengthen the religion through his abiding, and fasten the clasp of his sword onto the necks of the heretics (*al-muḥidīn*) and subdue the transgressors beneath his banners, assigning him victory until the Day of Judgment. [May God] hinder corrupt transgressors through [the caliph's] *jihād*, thereby sanctifying the earth from those who revile religion. May God restore through [the caliph's] justice the reign of his ancestors the Rāshidūn caliphs and rightly guided *imāms* who judged with truth, using it to rule and act equitably. Assist his helpers, decree his might (*qaddara iqtidārahu*) and allow his tranquility and dignity to reside in the hearts of the subjects. Consolidate his [position] in existence and rally together its regions to him.²³⁷⁶

Evoking perhaps both the primeval covenant between God and mankind and the *mirāj* night-journey of the Prophet, al-'Umarī, after lofty praise of the caliph's character, depicts al-Ḥākim's primordial incarnation before God and describes him as a son of heaven who beheld his predecessors. The document claims that although prophecy ended with Muḥammad, the caliph al-Ḥākim II was cut from the same cloth alongside his most praiseworthy ancestors.²³⁷⁷

In the *'ahd* for the sultan al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr, composed by al-Sharīf Shihāb al-Dīn, we find the proposition that the presence of the caliphate in Cairo secures divine protection of Muslim lands. The document, including the caliph al-Ḥākim II and ostensibly written by the caliph as "slave and *walī* of God," to the sultan, seeks mercy for the caliph's ancestors, begs God to arrange the unity of the caliphate and protect its noble position with the assistance of a noble ruler such as the Mamluk sultan. The *ḥamdala* praises God for establishing Abū Bakr as a sword of Islam to protect the *imām*, and for guiding the caliph to gather up the rights and satiate undeniable demands for justice.²³⁷⁸

²³⁷⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:63-4.

²³⁷⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:324; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 394-5.

²³⁷⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:324-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 395.

²³⁷⁸ Al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1:127.

The idea of God as divine selector of caliphs and the effect of supernatural intervention in earthly affairs is addressed in the *ḥamdala* of al-Mu‘taḍid’s 763/1362 *‘ahd* of succession for his son al-Mutawakkil. The author praises God as the one “who honored the sons of the caliphs in adornments of justice, dressing whomever He desired among them in robes of decency and humility, raising his ability (*qadr*) above his peers as he traversed paths of righteousness laid out before him.”²³⁷⁹

God similarly raised the caliphate and arranged for the Abbasids to hold authority as *imāms* of the Muslims. He likewise favored the family by increasing their power, intellect, liberality, and good judgment, choosing the best fathers and sons to establish the well-spring of the Commander of the Faithful. By ensuring that the caliph was suitable for office, God endowed the Muslim community with long-lasting benefit through the conclusion of the caliphate.²³⁸⁰

The rhetoric of the documents emphasizes God’s involvement in producing the best caliphs to hold office. Regarding the *walī al-‘ahd* on the verge of accession, God illuminates his eyesight, favoring him with purity, awarding him dominion and wisdom, and establishing him as a preserver of the interests of the subjects (*ra‘iyya*) and the defense of the *umma*, privy to knowledge of divine will. The idea is that the caliph, like ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, was a natural adept at practicing physiognomy (*firāsa*), i.e., using a person’s physical characteristics to provide insight into their character.²³⁸¹ Preference for the caliph over all other people of his age subsequently enhanced his mind and body.²³⁸²

The *ḥamdala* of a remaining fragment of the succession *‘ahd* for the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II (ca. 816/1414) thanks God for strengthening the *umma* by providing a caliph from the house of the Prophet “who remains as *shaykh* of the kings, [thus] setting forth his noble house [to serve the sultan as] a *mujtahid* and to erect the Abbasid flag after [the fashion] of Abū Muslim with Abī Naṣr.”²³⁸³ God and the sultan are praised for allowing the *‘ulamā’* to flourish in the reign of the latter.²³⁸⁴

Mamluk chancery employees also drew on the connection between God and the caliphate to make an impression on foreign supplicants to the Cairo caliphate. The *ḥamdala* of al-Musta‘īn to Muẓaffar Shāh of India, after praise for God “who strengthened the *‘ahd* of he who asks for

²³⁷⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:81.

²³⁸⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:371; idem, *Ma‘āthir*, 3:342-3.

²³⁸¹ On *firāsa* see: Robert Hoyland, “Physiognomy in Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005): 361-402.

²³⁸² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:372; idem, *Ma‘āthir*, 3:345.

²³⁸³ This may be a reference to Naṣr ibn Sayyār, the last Umayyad governor of Khurāsān who failed to halt the spread of the Abbasid propaganda (*da‘wa*) and nascent revolution which, with Abū Muslim at its helm, ousted Naṣr from Khurāsān in 130/748.

²³⁸⁴ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 57.

help [i.e., al-Musta‘īn],” mentions that God grants victory to the one who seeks it from beyond (Mamluk borders). The document establishes that for one to request caliphal recognition (since many contemporary Muslim rulers did not) assures victory and “decorates the skies of the world with bright lamps and sends out onto the far reaches of the earth the garbs of the noble caliphate.”²³⁸⁵ The sultan of India courted classical Abbasid legitimacy, which may suggest that he had domestic rivalries brewing in his own capital, and caliphal approval was no small matter.²³⁸⁶ The *ḥamdala* acknowledges perhaps, that those who recognized the Abbasid caliph in Mamluk protection were few and far between, but nevertheless blessed with the observation that “one who knows the family of this noble house is like the ark of Noah and we thank him with the thanks of one who receives wealth upon entering beneath the Abbasid standard.”²³⁸⁷

As far as the broader religious hierarchy was concerned, the documents could afford to attach a somewhat vague symbolic importance to the caliph’s position. Thus, juxtaposed against the Mamluk military arsenal at the dawn of the fourteenth century, the first caliph al-Ḥākim is described as the arsenal, or armory of religion (*dhakhīrat al-dīn*),²³⁸⁸ while by the end of the century his great grandson al-Mutawakkil was also dubbed the “instrument of religion (*uddat al-dīn*) and its armory.”²³⁸⁹

Prayers inaugurating the reign of al-Mustakfī in 701/1302 associated the caliph with the success of Islam and Mamluk rule. The author of the succession document includes a prayer that the caliph help strengthen religion, that the Muslims be blessed and happy through the promulgation of the Abbasid family, and that God raise the pillars of belief through the new caliph, making the *baraka* of his predecessors facilitate Muslim victory over disbelievers and tyrants.²³⁹⁰ The qadis who witnessed the succession of al-Mustakfī all signed a testament asserting that the ailing caliph al-Ḥākim, as *imām*, had been “the gatherer of authority to the faith (*īmān*), organizer of the unity of Islam, master of the learned caliphs, *imām* of the Muslims, defender of the *sharī‘a* of the master of the prophets, through whose abiding, God strengthened religion and blessed Islam and the Muslims.”²³⁹¹

The caliphate provided an excellent means for the regime to incorporate the ‘*ulamā*’ in document production and in offering official supervision of rituals and investitures to ensure

²³⁸⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:130; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 428.

²³⁸⁶ Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 296-8.

²³⁸⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:131; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 430.

²³⁸⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:63.

²³⁸⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:370; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:340-1.

²³⁹⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:64, 66.

²³⁹¹ Ibid., 2:65.

fidelity to the *sharī'a*.²³⁹² The documents, like the *bay'a/mubāya'a*, attempted to convey scholarly unanimity in the selection of a new caliph. The succession contract for al-Mustakfī's son al-Mustawthiq clarifies that in their consensus, the '*ulamā*' and the qadis granted the authority (*amr*) and the keys of the caliphate, as well as the right to make decisions in small or large matters to the caliph. If the incumbent caliph, having previously satisfied the criteria of the scholars, decided that his son should be the next caliph, it became lawful (*shar'iyya*) but required the unanimous consent of the '*ulamā*'. In the case of al-Mustawthiq, who did not live long enough to make good on the designation, the author of the document suggests that the *walī al-'ahd* had good character, the most obvious proof of which was that the '*ulamā*' and qadis had lent their blessing to his succession.²³⁹³

The rhetoric of the 763/1362 *walī al-'ahd* document for al-Mutawakkil similarly suggests that the candidate's good character should be common knowledge among the '*ulamā*' and any pious people that had access to the Abbasid family. The implication is that al-Mutawakkil is in fact a person of such character, and additionally, his father, "our master the *imām* al-Mu'taḍid sought God's guidance (*istikhāra*), was the grasper of piety, whose behavior was praiseworthy even when he was alone in seclusion [... and that] verily he has given the '*ahd*' to his son to fortify him -- the *imām* al-Mutawakkil 'alā 'l-lāh. May God grant victory and strengthen Islam through him, and provide continuous and everlasting benefit through him, having made him heir to his covenant, sanctioning him as caliph over the subjects."²³⁹⁴

The document for al-Mutawakkil begins with commentary on the theoretical status of the caliphate within the religious hierarchy:

The caliphate is the noblest garment for the people of religion, and the clearest garment of protection, and it is the source of every authority (*aṣl kulli al-siyāda*) connected to it -- the confidence of leadership growing exalted upon it. It is the most splendid of positions and it grew nobler, higher, and most splendid. [...] Among its requirements is that its designation must only be given to one who satisfactorily possesses its characteristics, adorns the sweetness of its pasture, and encourages, through his goodly life example, [the ascent] to lofty ranks.²³⁹⁵

In a later succession document issued in the name of the ailing al-Mu'taḍid II to his brother al-Mustakfī II, Kamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Suyūṭī (father of the famous scholar) described

²³⁹² The involvement of the '*ulamā*' appears to have imbued the state with Islamic authenticity and also provided an important public acknowledgment of the caliphate's incorporation into the Mamluk hierarchy. See: Lev, "Symbiotic Relations," 14; Mona F. Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate: The Trauma and Aftermath of 1258 and 1924" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 149.

²³⁹³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:390; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 2:339.

²³⁹⁴ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:82-3.

²³⁹⁵ Ibid., 2:82.

the outgoing caliph as “our master possessed of dignities- noble, pure, wholesome, [being of] the great imamate, Abbasid, prophetic, God-strengthened (*al-mu‘taḍidiyya*).” The document is strictly a testament proclaiming that al-Mu‘taḍid had made the covenant in favor of his brother “placing him as *imām* over the Muslims [...] with full trust and approval to council them (*naṣīḥat lil-muslimīn*) and to fulfill the obligations upon him in regard to the interests of the monotheists (*al-muwahḥidīn*), to follow the traditions (*sunna*) of the Rāshidūn caliphs and guided imams.” The document affirms that the appointment of al-Mustakfī relates to his religious knowledge, goodness, suitability and his predecessor’s testimonial that “[al-Mustakfī] is the most god-fearing and trustworthy of any he has seen.”²³⁹⁶

4. Explicit Exposition of Caliphal Authority in Society

That, in practice, the Abbasid caliphs were powerless inferiors to the mighty Mamluk sultans is clear from the wording of contemporary annals. The caliph and qadis were “summoned” and compelled to invest the sultan.²³⁹⁷ A markedly different image of the caliph’s authority plays out in the documents and we are fortunate that many bureaucratic professionals saw fit to outline their interpretation of the caliphate’s ideal functionality in an Islamic society. Al-Ḥalabī’s investiture deed for Kitbughā sought blessings for the Rāshidūn caliphs and their successors and later addressed the unique position of the caliphate in Islamdom:

Verily God granted something of the innermost secrets of prophethood to the Commander of the Faithful, entrusting him with the ordinances (*aḥkām*) of the hereditary imamate from the nobility of his ancestors. [God] distinguished him and made obedience to him obligatory upon the nations, and made administration of the most private and general interests (*maṣāliḥ*) of the Muslims mandatory upon him. [God] defended his views from defect by virtue of the *baraka* of his ancestors, and made the arrow of his *ijtihād* forever true in speech and deed.²³⁹⁸

As for the sultan, having been invested with the former prerogatives of the caliph, al-Ḥalabī depicts him as one in whom God gathers authority in Islam to subdue the earth and restrain whimsical desire, allowing the beacon of religion to be raised high.²³⁹⁹ Some years later, the letter sent to the Rasulid leader, attributed to the caliph al-Mustakfī of Cairo, sought to edify the Yemeni ruler with respect to caliphal authority. The letter establishes that God had allowed the caliphate to persist in the Abbasid line until the Day of Judgment,²⁴⁰⁰ and that the Prophet’s

²³⁹⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 409.

²³⁹⁷ Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 12.

²³⁹⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:48; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:41-2.

²³⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:152-3; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:422; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:258.

companions protected the caliphate and defended the bases of its authority, thereby erecting Islam on a solid foundation.²⁴⁰¹ To further illustrate caliphal importance, the Mamluk chancery assumes the voice of al-Mustakfī to explain his own authority and *de facto* relationship to his office:

The religion (*dīn*) which God has imposed upon all men, from which suns of guidance rise forth in the east and west; God in His wisdom has entrusted it to our command and rulings; He girded us with a great sword to serve the great caliphate, and increased His helpers and supporters and delegated us with command in the realms of Islam and for us to gather their fruits to our sanctuary, and raised to our great office (*dīwān*) our rejection or approval (of taxation and other financial practices). [...] God delegated the garment of the caliphate (*ḥullat al-khilāfa*) upon us, and made it a noble position of mercy and clemency, and sat us at the seat of the caliphate (*suddat khilāfa*) so long as it was supervised by the heirs of our forefathers, and rejoiced in the great leadership of the great nobles among our predecessors, and dressed us in robes of dominion dyed black [...] and used us to direct public and private affairs, establishing [our authority] in each region [...] making us sufficient [...] and we took Egypt as the abode (*dār*) of our position thereby making it the *seat* of our position in this age [thus allowing it to become] the Dome of Islam (*Qubbat al-Islām*) [...] ²⁴⁰²

It is interesting that the passage underscores the physical person of the caliph. Bureaucrats and scholars, perhaps speaking to the wider contemporary understanding of the caliphate, appear to have forced a necessary distinction between the caliphate and the position of the caliph. The caliph has received a sword from God to protect his office, effectively making him caretaker of the institution. The caliph and sultan are presented here as distinct poles of power, both of whom are expected to defend a greater notion of the caliphate. Thus the roles of sultan and caliph are blurred and not presented as separate positions. This document supports the civilizational understanding of a Grand Caliphate comprised of both caliph and sultan, within the same circle, as parts of a larger entity. Although the historical reality reinforced the idea that they were two different people with a vast disparity in actual power, the idea expressed in this letter represented something different, forcing the notion that the caliph in the Mamluk period was indeed far more than an empty title. The sultan was part of the caliphate and shared in its ruling and in its defense. Both the caliph and sultan had different roles to fulfill; much of the sultan's work involved the difficult tasks of ruling and actual sovereignty, while the caliph worked to curry God's favor.

B. The Caliphate and the Natural World

²⁴⁰¹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:153; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:422; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:258.

²⁴⁰² Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:153-4; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:423; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:258-9.

With the advent of the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, the caliph’s office assumed an increasingly formal, regal air and caliphs ceased to be regarded as *primus inter pares* in the style of the bedouin tribal *shaykh*.²⁴⁰³ Among the early Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad, the caliphal dignity assumed numinous characteristics emphasized by the pomp and ceremony of the office influenced by the influx of Persian bureaucrats from the former Sasanian administration bearing their own ideas of what classical kingship ought to look like. The person of the caliph became venerated; the man himself became difficult to access behind a maze of guarded passages, and petitioners who gained access often kissed the hem of his garment or the ground at his feet while an armed headman looked on. In distinction to the traditional reputation of the Rāshidūn caliphs whose sanctity had stemmed from their preservation of *sharī‘* precepts and morality, that which prevailed under the Abbasid caliphs of the tenth century and onward had been

Kingship of a universal type: half brutal power and half theatre. The theatre owed something to the fact that rulers had come to be credited with a cosmic role, in the sense that they were believed to influence the regularities of nature. Natural disasters would ensue if caliphs were killed, it was held [...] Both caliphs and kings were seen as having special access to the sources of life, health, energy and well-being, in short, of all the pagan desiderata which the great salvation religions had reduced to secondary importance. The basic assumption behind these ideas is that the regularities of nature depended on a moral order which it was the duty of the king to maintain. “When rulers act wrongly, the heavens dry up,” a saying ascribed to the Prophet had it. The assumption was pagan, not only in the sense that it pre-dated the rise of monotheism and placed a high premium on well-being in this world, but also in the sense that it idolized a single human being in a manner that Sunnis were normally quick to disown.²⁴⁰⁴

That the caliph and his office were supernaturally linked to balance in the corporeal world was not an uncommon proposition for document authors of the Mamluk period. Some chancery secretaries reiterated that the Abbasid caliphate enjoyed a mystical influence that, if ever disturbed or outraged, could cause serious repercussions in the physical world.

Al-‘Umarī, after waging a lengthy public relations campaign to install al-Ḥākim II as caliph, wrote that God had chosen the caliph’s father al-Mustakfī as an honored servant, and that if the caliph had not named his successor (i.e. al-Ḥākim II), the earth would have grown narrow and unable to withstand the immensity of events unfolding upon its surface. Al-‘Umarī warns the court of dire consequences resulting from the Mamluk administration’s irresponsible treatment of al-Ḥākim II, whose claim to the caliphate had been infamously rebuffed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

²⁴⁰³ Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, 40.

²⁴⁰⁴ Crone, *God’s Rule*, 163-4.

For al-‘Umarī, both *minbar* and *sarīr* (religious and military infrastructures, respectively) would be jeopardized, if the deathbed wishes of al-Mustakfī failed to be upheld.²⁴⁰⁵

If indeed the Mamluk religious intelligentsia considered the classical caliphate as the next most important authority after God, al-‘Umarī’s document for al-Ḥākim II establishes a special relationship between God and the caliphate while also alluding to the institution’s distinctive link to order in the physical world:

Verily, God (*al-malik al-salām*), since the prostration of His noble angels to Adam in bygone ages, has made obedience to the caliphs in His lands an imposition upon the rest of His slaves. Why should it not be thus when it is through [these caliphs] that creation prospers, limits (*ḥudūd*) are upheld, and the pillars of disbelief soundly destroyed!? So long as they live, the lands are secured (*ta’manu al-bilād*), but as [the caliphs] near death, the moon dons a shroud of mourning and the celestial body (*jirm* or *jurum*) hides itself away.²⁴⁰⁶

Similarly, the succession contract for al-Musta‘īn links the document’s “blessed beginning, beautiful middle, and praiseworthy end” to the alignment of celestial bodies including the Pleiades star group and the constellation Taurus, amidst claims that the deed itself had been “written with pens of acceptance on the pages of the celestial spheres.” The *‘ahd* makes “rivers dance with joy” and is also tied to the stations of the sun. The author drives home the point that widespread joy emanates from the successful conclusion of the contract of the caliphate among kings and the perpetuation of the natural world.²⁴⁰⁷

The health of the community *vis-à-vis* the wellbeing of the caliphate was likewise an important theme. The two were thought to be linked, as if by magic, as a respective micro and macrocosm. The letter purported to be from al-Mustakfī to Yemen states that the existence and condition of the governed body would not be in good condition but for the presence (or perhaps the mere existence) of the caliph, and that a full consensus for the *imām*’s investiture had been necessary.²⁴⁰⁸

C. Courtly Expectations, Duties, and Advice for the Caliph

In the Mamluk era, the mere presence of the Abbasid caliph exuded sanctity, leading to a widespread expectation that the docile men elevated to (the now largely religious) dignity ought not to degrade themselves by interfering in politics for personal gain. In writing about the cases of various caliphs drawn into Mamluk politics many chroniclers attempted neutrality, but the

²⁴⁰⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:323; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 394.

²⁴⁰⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:63.

²⁴⁰⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:369; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:340.

²⁴⁰⁸ Vermeulen, “La *bay’a* califale,” 297-8.

notable case of the caliph al-Qā'im bi-amr Allāh (855-9/1451-5) left some authors too shocked by the idea of a caliph failing to act as a detached man of piety to conceal their repugnance.²⁴⁰⁹

The sultans and 'ulamā' were cognizant of the inherent religious authority of the caliphate, which both sides might manipulate for their own interests.²⁴¹⁰ Investiture document rhetoric regularly suggests that government stability depended on a caliph's prayers for the promulgation of the state. Many Mamluk authors perceived this as fact, thus considering the caliphs more than window-dressing and wrote of them as fixtures integral to the maintenance and functionality of the regime. The Mamluks likewise made the official understanding of the 'ulamā' their own and made the caliph a vital part of their court culture, pageantry, and to a lesser degree their political machinations.

Investiture deeds and caliphal succession contracts, necessarily involving the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo, were a likely place for scholars and bureaucrats not only to advise but also to reveal what was expected of appointees to the holiest office in Sunni Mamluk Egypt. Unlike the *waṣīyya* sections of many investiture deeds which offered detailed advice to the Mamluk sultan concerning the expectations and duties attached to his office, no similar section existed exclusively for the Abbasid caliph. Therefore, many contemporary scholars have concluded that the caliph, after having bestowed his authority on the sultan, thereafter was responsible for very little. The opposite is true, however, as advice and expectations for the position of the caliph are sprinkled throughout many of the documents, often, again, within the *ḥamdala* section. Indirectly and largely confined to the world of rhetoric, document composers provided insight into the perception of the caliphate at court and how, in theory, it was conceived to function alongside sultans, amirs, and the 'ulamā'. The following thematic categories, as may be expected, are not mutually exclusive.

1. The Caliph is the Living Symbol of Jihād

In the classical Abbasid caliphate, the caliph was formally the chief leader of *jihād* and the organizer of annual raids, albeit often merely for show in the later Abbasid period, against

²⁴⁰⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 16:35, 158, 194; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo, 1997), 1:264-5; idem, *Ḥawādith al-duḥūr fī madā al-ayyām wa-al-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper as "Extracts from Abū 'l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī's Chronicle Entitled Ḥawādith ad-duḥūr fī madā 'l-ayyām wash-shuhūr," *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930-42), 232-8; al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:167; 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl Ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī al-Ḥanafī [al-Malaṭī], *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Sidon : al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2002), 5:442-3; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 2:327-8.

²⁴¹⁰ For example, al-Suyūṭī's Ṣafar 902/October 1496 attempt to secure religious authority in Egypt, by putting forth the idea of a newly-created post of "grand qadi" (*qāḍī kabīr*) appointed by the caliph. See: Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 3:339.

non-Muslim positions.²⁴¹¹ The role of the caliph as principal cheerleader for holy war persisted under the Mamluks, as is evident in the fierce *jihād-khuṭbas* given by al-Ḥākim in 661/1262 and 690-1/1291 which praised the Mamluk sultan as one who “permits religion to be supported by his sword, who stands firm in *jihād* and gathers the kings of unbelief beneath his feet.”²⁴¹²

In the deed for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the scribe Ibn al-Qaysarānī depicted the caliph as one who emboldened both the army and the people to take up the cause against enemies of the faith.²⁴¹³ By selecting the caliph from the house of the Prophet’s uncle and choosing them from the best of the *umma*, God strengthened the heart (*jāsh*) of the Muslims and monotheist forces (*juyūsh al-muwahḥidīn*) against the unbelieving heretics (*al-mulḥidīn*), “granting [the caliph] the command (*siyāda*) and good fortune (*sa’āda*) of his ancestor [...] and through [the caliph], protecting the believers and producing a leader for the fervent adherents (*al-muttaqīn*), increasing him in the dual honors: station and lineage.”²⁴¹⁴

As a status quo symbol, the caliph was moreover expected to stand against all challengers of the established order. Faced by the threat of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s return to Cairo in 709/1310, the second document confirming the authority of Baybars al-Jāshinkīr threatened the ousted sultan in the voice of the caliph al-Mustakfī: “I will go out and lead an army against [al-Nāṣir Muḥammad] if he persists in this. I will defend the sanctity of the Muslims and their souls and children in this great matter and I will fight him until he returns to the order of God.”²⁴¹⁵ The document, challenging the notion that kingship is hereditary, states that sovereignty is the prerogative of God to bestow upon whomever He wills, and that the reins of power fall to whoever can suppress the people of rebellion and protect the religion from misfortune.²⁴¹⁶

In his succession testament of al-Ḥākim II in 741/1341, al-‘Umarī saw a clear resemblance between the caliph and the Prophet in his dual capacities as a soldier (*‘askarī*) during the day followed by entire nights engaged in worship (*huwa fī layl al-sajjād*), “perpetually in supplication to God for His success (*tawfīq*).” For al-‘Umarī, it was the job of the caliph to seek out divine blessings (*ni’māt*) to overthrow God’s enemies.²⁴¹⁷

²⁴¹¹ This remained a symbolic role of the caliph after power was stripped away by amirs and sultans.

²⁴¹² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:55; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:53.

²⁴¹³ This had been true of al-Ḥākim at the time of the document’s composition and it was also true four years later in 702/1303 when al-Mustakfī accompanied the Mamluk army to Shaqḥab to lend his prayers on campaign. See: al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 4:233-4; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:933. Al-Mustakfī, like his father al-Ḥākim, had been no stranger to Mamluk *jihād* propaganda and ceremonial. For his role as a prayer leader while embedded in the Mamluk military, see above, pp. 84-5.

²⁴¹⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:61; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:1:63-5.

²⁴¹⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:1:66; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:263. The last line appears to be an allusion to verse 49:9 of the Qur’ān which addresses conflict among two factions of believers.

²⁴¹⁶ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:128-9; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:69; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:113.

²⁴¹⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:326; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 395-6.

As for the practical application of warfare, al-‘Umarī was content to let day-to-day command in *jihād* remain with the sultan, formally the caliph’s deputy, who, having been delegated with authority beyond the caliphate, is appointed by God “as an eye that never sleeps.”²⁴¹⁸ By ordering the Mamluk sultan to engage in *jihād*, the caliph is expected to restore any and all disruptions caused by the regime’s enemies. Despite al-‘Umarī’s acknowledgment that the sultan had been delegated to undertake *jihād* in the caliph’s name, it is still the latter who restores order to the world via holy war:

[The caliph’s] decree to continue military expeditions (*ghazw*) on land and by sea has already gone forth. He will not hesitate to kill or capture those over whom he gains victory, nor will he free them from their fetters and bonds. [The caliph will not] desist in sending crow-like vessels by sea and eagle-like steeds on land; all of them bearing falcon-like riders. He will protect the domains (*mamālik*) against any whose feet dare to breach them. He will oversee the reparations of citadels, fortresses, and frontiers (assessing their need in regard to weapons and all they require to weaken the ruse (*al-muhtāl*) of the enemies), as well as the capital cities which are the stations of the troops [...] He will inspect their conditions for review [including] everything they have between the heavens and the earth: their closely-quartered horses, their chain-mail, and their swords sheathed in gold, as if they were beautiful, wide-eyed maidens hidden from view.²⁴¹⁹ Through all of this, the caliph wants to gladden your hearts and lengthen the elongated coat tail (*dhayl al-taṭwīl*) over your desires. Your blood, wealth, and honor (*a’rāḍ*) will be protected save for that which the pure *sharī‘a* prohibits.²⁴²⁰

In practice, however, Mamluk sultans expected the ceremonial participation of the caliph and the qadis on larger campaigns, though in some cases the religious officials merely stayed behind at the edge of nearby towns, clutching copies of the Qur’ān and assuring participants that Muslim martyrs would reside in paradise while the enemy was destined for torment in hell.²⁴²¹

2. The Caliph Summons God’s Assistance through Constant Prayer for the State

Under the Mamluks, the caliph’s informal religious duties included public and private prayers for the perpetuation and success of the realm. Although seemingly without immediate material benefit, the caliph’s prayers for Mamluk triumph and Muslim prosperity are part of a legacy not easily dismissed. The theme of the caliph praying for the success of sultan and dynasty

²⁴¹⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:329; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 398. This resembles the caliph al-Ḥākim’s *khuṭba* in which he describes the vigilance of the sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl to the Mamluks, “When you sleep, he is awake.” See: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 48.

²⁴¹⁹ *Bayḍ maknūn*. This is an allusion to verse 37:48-9 of the Qur’ān which compares the women of paradise to eggs hidden by feathers.

²⁴²⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:329-30; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 398.

²⁴²¹ Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 361.

(*dawla*) is as at least as old as the late Seljuq period.²⁴²² The late twelfth/early thirteenth century Persian historian Muḥammad al-Rāvandī claimed in his *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr va āyat al-surūr* that the atabeg of sultan Ṭughril III (571-90/1176-94), irritated by a recent resurgence in the caliph's influence, had remarked that "the *imām* should concern himself with delivering the *khuṭba* and leading the prayers which serve to protect worldly monarchs and are the best of deeds. He should entrust kingship to the sultans and leave governance of the world to [the Seljuq sultan]." ²⁴²³ That this theme is picked up again in the Mamluk sultanate is not without significance.

Al-‘Abbās and his descendants had long been associated with public prayers seeking an end to drought (*ṣalāt al-istisqā’*), beginning with the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who asked the Prophet's uncle to pray for rain in hope that God would answer the prayers of Muḥammad's kinsman.²⁴²⁴ The historical anecdote was not wasted on the Mamluk religious class who occasionally alluded to the contemporary Abbasid caliph as a descendant of al-‘Abbās (whom the rains had obeyed) in panegyrics and other literature concerned with the caliph's house.²⁴²⁵

The first document which alluded to the significance of caliphal prayers is the ‘*ahd* of al-Manṣūr Lājīn, which declares that the caliph had engaged in the supplication ritual of *istikhāra*, offering prayers for the regime to obtain the best outcomes and advantages.²⁴²⁶ Indeed, the document describes the start of Lājīn's reign as a blessing (*ni‘ma*) to the *umma* attributable to the caliph's prayers. It was the caliph, in search of someone to carry out his own duties, who prayed that God send someone to take up Islamic sovereignty and thereby appoint Lājīn to uphold the

²⁴²² Barthold, "Caliph and Sultan," 132.

²⁴²³ *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, ed. Muḥammad Iqbāl (London: Luzac, 1921), 334. Al-Ghazālī likewise wrote against the notion of the caliph interfering in the political world of the Seljuq sultans. See: Crone, *God's Rule*, 247-8.

²⁴²⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 10:204; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 104-5.

²⁴²⁵ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Altāf al-khaṣṣiyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sultāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg, as *Ur Abd Allah b. Abd ez-Zāhir's Biografī över Sultanen el-Melik al-Aṣraf Ḥalīl. Arabisk Tāxt med Översättning, Inledning Ock Anmärkningarna Utgiven*, (Lund, 1902), 14; al-Qalqashandī, *Ma'āthir*, 1:1-2. See also panegyrics for the Cairo Abbasids attributed to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, quoted in: al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 3:215; idem, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ‘alā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*, ed. Ḥasan Ismā‘īl Marwa (Beirut, 1992), 1:634; idem, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl ‘alā duwal al-Islām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma'rūf, ‘Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī, and Aḥmad al-Khuṭaymī (Beirut, 1995), 2:581; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 404-6; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1:2:823-4.

²⁴²⁶ *Istikhāra* as taught by the Prophet to his disciples, was frequently encouraged to entrust God with the selection between multiple possible options and involved two ritual prayer units (*rak'as*) "followed by a prayer, emphasizing the omniscience and omnipotence of God and including a reference to the subject of the consultation. Neither time nor place is fixed for a consultation of this kind. The inspiration revealing the decision to be taken is immediately perceived, or, if the response be insufficiently clear in the consultant's mind, he has recourse to a drawing of lots from the various possible solutions, written separately on pieces of paper." See: Toufic A. Fahd, "Istikhāra," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:259-60.

trust (*amāna*), as he was best suited to enforce that which was religious obligation (*farḍ*).²⁴²⁷ In the “search process” that led to the delegation of power to Lājīn, the caliph offered copious prayers for guidance on behalf of the community and sought refuge with God, relying on His support (*tawfiq*) to uphold correctness, offer guidance and protect sovereignty (*ḥukm*).²⁴²⁸

In what remains of al-Mustakfī’s succession deed for his son Baraka al-Mustawthiq, the author explains that caliphal power stems from the officeholder’s fear of God in every matter, including delegation to his successor. The caliph seeks the best outcome from God in every matter, including even his own decision to become caliph or leave it to another.²⁴²⁹ In the investiture deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, before delegating power to the sultan, the selection is put onto secure religious footing by noting “our lord and master, the *imām* al-Mustakfī billāh, Commander of the Faithful [...] beseeches God Most High for the best outcome (*istikhāra Allāh ta’āla*).”²⁴³⁰

From the succession contract left to al-Musta’in by his father al-Mutawakkil, the caliph is told that the purpose of his office is to “seek the face of God” [through prayer]:

Whoever looks to God for victory and help worries not, aware of the certain truth that the goodness of the *imām* is multiplied on account of everything he is charged with concerning the interests [of Islam and Muslims] or in renewing the means for obtaining them [just as] his badness or evil is multiplied.²⁴³¹

Muḥammad al-Bārīzī’s investiture deed for al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh, while appealing to caliphal authority, mandates that the caliph alone must beseech God for the best outcome for the Muslims and their lands.²⁴³² That the caliph should quietly pray for the success of the sultan ideally kept him in the mosque and out of politics, leaving the sultan free to set about the difficult and impious tasks of empire. This is why Shaykh’s document used the authority of the caliphate for little more than the delegation of authority combined with the understanding that the caliph would continue to pray for the best outcomes. At the end of the document, al-Bārīzī again conjures an image of a devout caliph, determined to honor the contract, ever engaged in sincere prayer:

The caliph seeks the forgiveness of God in every circumstance and seeks the refuge of God from heedlessness. The caliph seals his words with that which God has

²⁴²⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:55; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:54.

²⁴²⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:58 (unnumbered); idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:59-60.

²⁴²⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:390; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 2:338.

²⁴³⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:132; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:72.

²⁴³¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:376; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:352. This statement reflects verse 13:11 of the Qur’ān which states that God does not change a people until they change what is within them.

²⁴³² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:123.

ordered of justice and beneficence (*iḥsān*) and he praises God as He is the most praiseworthy (i.e., Aḥmad) and God has granted him Solomonic kingship (*mulk Sulaymān*), and God Most High grants the caliph enjoyment with that which He has given him, He makes him possessor of the regions of the land [...] may his seat never cease to be on the elevated seats of loftiness and the garb of the caliphate through him be the splendor of eminence [...]²⁴³³

Most documents that allude to the caliph's delegation also state that the decision to delegate the affairs of Islamic lands or otherwise deliver the reins of power to the next sultan, comes hand in hand with the caliph asking God for proper guidance in the exchange of power made in the *'ahd*. This indicates that the caliph is primarily important for his prayers and what many considered to be his access to God based on the prestige and traditional influence attributed to his office.

3. The Caliph "Selects" Sultans in Accordance with Divine Decree

In the practical realm of Mamluk politics, the new sultan was chosen when the most powerful Mamluk amir emerged with the most influence among his *khushdāsh* to seize power from the incumbent sultan in what appears to modern historians as an endless series of coups. In the theoretical world of caliphal documents, however, the prayers of the Abbasid caliph are linked to yet another task, the task of selecting the best candidate to take up his former duties. The caliph's prayers reach God, who then directs the Commander of the Faithful towards the best candidate for office.²⁴³⁴ Thus it appears that in some ways, the caliph becomes the catalyst (or even a magnet or lightning rod) for the divine election of the Mamluk sultan.²⁴³⁵ Most documents include no other intermediary between God and the sultan. The Prophet is not involved other than to serve as the famous ancestor of the caliph. Thus the Abbasid caliph, in some ways, occupies a more important role than the Prophet himself which he achieves through prayer, *istikhāra*, and a kind of unique "revelation" regarding the sultan's suitability for rule.

Some documents appear to attribute divine wisdom to the caliph, a gift used for the betterment of society through the installation of outstanding leaders. In his counsel for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Ibn al-Qaysarānī assures the sultan, that even though the caliph al-Ḥākim had initially testified unfavorably to his minority, he had known (perhaps through divine insight) that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's rule would bring great benefit, based on reports of his probity and noble deeds. The author claims that the caliph felt both a longing and a closeness to the young sultan

²⁴³³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:331; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rikh al-khulafā'*, 399.

²⁴³⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:56-7; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:56-7.

²⁴³⁵ The Quranic passage most frequently cited to support Islamic kingship and ideas of divine election is verse 3:16, "O God, Possessor of dominion/kingship (*mulk*), you confer dominion/kingship to whom you will and you take away dominion/kingship from whom you will."

and although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had been an exile in distant Karak, the caliph, an ever-watchful admirer from afar, kept his love of the rightful ruler close, never feeling his absence.²⁴³⁶

After extensive praise and flattery for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Ibn al-Qaysarānī writes that the sultan had been tried and found in possession of the many noble characteristics of his father Qalāwūn.²⁴³⁷ It is thus news of his good character that inspires a message from the capital:

The caliph has observed the ways in which your opponents have tested you and he is aware of your accountability, your dignity in conducting affairs, and your good deeds, so he has chosen you according to his knowledge of the worlds (*'alā 'ilm 'alā al-'ālamīn*) and selected you to defend Islam and the Muslims. He seeks the proper guidance of God (*istikhāra Allāh*) in these matters and delegates to you from his blessed *bay'a* [...] He concludes a testament with you in all that is encompassed in the invocation (*da'wa*) of his grand imamate, and the ordinances (*aḥkām*) of his caliphate which the regions remain bound to in obedience and organization and he delegates to you the sultanate of the Islamic territories: land and sea, Egypt and Syria, near and far, lowland and highland and all that which will be conquered in the future.²⁴³⁸

Before embarking upon the *waṣīyya* advising al-Nāṣir Muḥammad about the duties of his office, Ibn al-Qaysarānī revisits the theme of the caliph selecting the sultan to act in his stead:

Glad tidings to you! The caliph chose you with great care and established you in his place in all good pleantry and realized that the felicity of his reign continues from you [by virtue of his] ancestors and descendants.²⁴³⁹

The overall message of the document appears to be a statement of reassurance directed to the sultan on the honors implicit in his divine election facilitated by the Abbasid caliph, a holy man with celestial favor and access to God. Ibn al-Qaysarānī urges al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in the caliph's name, to carry out the duties of an Islamic ruler.

The later diploma for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr named al-Mustakfī as chief executor of affairs, portraying him as the one who establishes a new sultan and then summons the secretaries to confirm the *bay'a*.²⁴⁴⁰

Some of the Circassian-era documents composed by Ibn Ḥijja including the investiture deed for Ṭaṭar, which states, "our master the Commander of the Faithful has cast the staff of his selection to choose the *imām*, and the real chooser in the matter was God,"²⁴⁴¹ mention the caliph's figurative "staff of selection." Elsewhere the caliph "cast his staff" on [Ṭaṭar's] selection

²⁴³⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:63-4; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:68-9.

²⁴³⁷ Ibid.

²⁴³⁸ Ibid.

²⁴³⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:66; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:72.

²⁴⁴⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:133; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:73.

²⁴⁴¹ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 338.

as sultan, and carried out *ijtihād* to the utmost of his ability until Ṭaṭar sat atop the throne to “purify the land (against mischief-makers) with good deeds.”²⁴⁴² The implication here is that by recognizing the sultan, the caliph is transformed into the vessel or instrument of God’s selection of the sultan and a mode for divine intervention in political affairs. In both his copious practice of *istikhāra* and the metaphorical “casting of his staff for decision” the caliph was expected to serve as the guide of the greater Muslim community, as the diviner and compass of its spiritual path, shape, and direction.

4. The Caliph Represents Accountability for the Sultan

In the ideality described by the documents and contracts examined here, authors largely presented the Abbasid caliph as a source of authority powerful enough to place a check on the sultan’s influence and provide an authority to whom the sultan was answerable. It was not that the caliph out-ranked the sultan, rather they represented separate parts of a single entity, each meant to advise the other. Most importantly, the caliph had bestowed his powers upon the sultan as a trust.²⁴⁴³

Addressing the Mamluk sultan, the *taqlīd* of Baybars praises God who “has placed by your side an *imām*, a guide, who has affixed the virtue of magnificence (*maziyyat al-ta’zīm*) to you, and has informed creation about that which God has distinguished you out of His glorious bounty.”²⁴⁴⁴ In isolation, this statement suggests the expectation that the holder of the caliphate ought to be capable of guiding the sultan or at least counsel him about policy to ensure fidelity to Islamic principles and the will of God. In the context of the document, however, this is the preamble to a proclamation calling for *jihād* against Mongols and Crusaders.²⁴⁴⁵

The first investiture deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr praises God for tying the affairs of rule to one sufficiently capable of upholding them (i.e. the sultan). The caliph is then said to praise the sultan who upholds the authority of belief (*kalimat al-īmān*) with noble supporters.²⁴⁴⁶

Before embarking on the advice of the *waṣīyya*, the document addresses Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, reminding him of his obligations to the caliph who has personally overseen and

²⁴⁴² Ibid., 346-7.

²⁴⁴³ This closely resembles al-Ghazālī’s conception of the exchange between the caliph and sultan. See: Crone, *God’s Rule*, 244-5.

²⁴⁴⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 107. This idea is also manifest in the processions in which the caliph rode both before Baybars, and at his side. Baybars is expected to lift hopes and lead to the path of truth. We are informed that the sultan was then robed after a procession, and advised to consider the robes proof of God’s satisfaction and the sultan’s guaranteed admission into paradise.

²⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 107-8. The document revisits Baybars’s *jihād* record and praises his experience, while stating the hope that the Mamluk sultan might “regain the former seat of the caliph” as a future goal.

²⁴⁴⁶ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:129; al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 10:69.

underwritten his rise to power. In even clearer terms, the document enjoins the caliph and sultan to advise each other: the sultan as expert in warfare must advise the caliph about temporal matters while the caliph in turn serves as the sultan's spiritual guide:

The caliph, in seeking a cure for that which mires the *umma* in difficulty, relies upon your auspicious counsel. He is sufficed by your qualifications and responsibility in guarding the realm [...] and he relates to you the best advice.²⁴⁴⁷

5. Grounded in Godly Piety (*taqwā*), the Caliph upholds the *Sharī'a*

With good reason, many modern studies of the caliphate refer to the caliph, especially in later times, as a significant "symbol of the *sharī'a*."²⁴⁴⁸ A number of the documents described here reinforce the idea that the caliph's authority stems equally from his piety (*taqwā*) as well as his ability to inculcate the commandments and prohibitions (*awāmir wa-nahy*) of God.

In its rebuke to the Rasulid ruler of Yemen, the Mamluk chancery, borrowing the voice of the caliph al-Mustakfī, stressed that any would-be ruler must be in accordance with the *sharī'a* if he wished to "live in the company of he whom the caliphate had adorned with its necklaces (i.e., the Mamluk sultan)," followed by praises of the chief exemplar, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who occupied the throne invested with sovereignty over distant lands and the administration of human affairs, all granted to him by the Abbasid caliph al-Mustakfī.²⁴⁴⁹

In explicit terms al-ʿUmarī lays out the theoretical position and formal expectations for the Abbasid caliph in the Mamluk court:

[The caliph] follows and conforms to the noble *sharī'a*, enjoining it upon the people. [...] The caliph hastens [to deliver] that which heals the souls (*bi-mā yashfā bihi al-nufūs*). With it, [the caliph] causes the abatement of Satan's schemes, forcing him to despair. He acquires the hearts of the subjects although he has no need because he leads [them].²⁴⁵⁰

The documents frequently reiterate the proposition that *taqwā* resides at the heart of the caliphate, a source of guidance and the basis for orders issued and opinions given by the caliph, reinforcing the notion that in the context of Mamluk Egypt, the caliph was primarily a man of

²⁴⁴⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:133-4; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:73. These sentiments mirror the advisory relationship between al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Hākim, who the historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir described as Alexander and Khidr respectively. See: Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Alīqāf*, 5.

²⁴⁴⁸ D. B. MacDonald, "The Caliphate" in *Moslem World* 7 (1917): 357; H. A. R. Gibb, "Some Considerations on the Sunnī Theory of the Caliphate" in *Studies of the Civilization of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 141; A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 14.

²⁴⁴⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:152; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:422; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:257.

²⁴⁵⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:327; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 397.

religion.²⁴⁵¹ A second factor in caliphal authority was the idea that the caliph demands that knowledge of God's commandments and prohibitions be made widespread. It is thus foremost amongst his duties to promote and represent the *sharī'a* and advise the faithful that God's commands were inescapable.²⁴⁵²

Urging his audience of Mamluk notables to overlook the debauchery of al-Wāthiq's caliphate, al-'Umarī, in solidifying the succession of al-Ḥākim II in 741/1341, recommends that his listeners disregard any outstanding quarrels with the caliphate so that the present caliph might be left to the all important task of "passing among the people with the Qur'ān and *sunna*; acting in accordance with that which God has bestowed and sent."²⁴⁵³

Regarding the "commands and prohibitions of God," the caliph, according to al-'Umarī, demanded the religious establishment to scrutinize them, ordered mosque orators to formulate their speeches by taking them into consideration, and that the people of excellence should use them to attain perfection. It was the caliph's wish and duty to see that they be discussed by men and women in all walks of life.²⁴⁵⁴ Thus the caliph is presented as a force raising public awareness about Islam among the subjects of Mamluk Egypt.

The succession contract for al-Musta'īn employs the analogy of a shepherd's responsibility to his flock in order to describe a caliph "nominated to undertake the order of God for His slaves; charged with advising them to the best of his ability and capacity for *ijtihād*; required to oversee their interests at present, in future, and at the origin and completion of their affair."²⁴⁵⁵ Again touching on the importance of the caliph's piety, the document reminds the new Commander of the Faithful that in his supervision of affairs, *taqwā* is vital.²⁴⁵⁶ As kingship and religion had been described in the famous maxim attributed to the Sasanian monarch Ardashīr, the Qur'ān and *sunna* (the sources of *sharī'a*) were likewise to be two inseparable and indispensable "brothers" for the caliph.²⁴⁵⁷

The image of the caliph's unswerving loyalty to the *sharī'a* had the same lineaments at the advent of Barsbāy in 825/1422. Ibn Ḥijja strengthened the caliphal foundations through his claim that the caliph, leader of the people, is invincible; never deviating from leadership or

²⁴⁵¹ Numerous documents reference *taqwā* in connection to the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo: al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:129-30; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:49, 56-7, 70, 124-5; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:43, 56-7; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:82-3.

²⁴⁵² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:328; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 397.

²⁴⁵³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:329; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 397.

²⁴⁵⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:328; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 397.

²⁴⁵⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:372; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:343-4.

²⁴⁵⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:372; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:350.

²⁴⁵⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:376; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:351.

yielding to the corrupting forces of popular knowledge, non-revelation, and folk wisdom, even if threatened with physical force.²⁴⁵⁸

The caliph was also expected to hold the sultan up to the standard of holy law and force him to remain on its track. The 824/1421 letter sent by the Mamluk chancery announcing the commencement of Ṭaṭar's reign to the Rasulid ruler of Yemen, al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (803-27/1400-24), describes the caliph as having elevated the foundations of the faith by forcing the sultan to embark upon the *sharī'* path of religious law, following the precepts agreed upon by Muslims. The document assumes a monolithic version of Islam that demands that the rules of belief be upheld and also asserts to Yemen that support for the caliph's designation of Ṭaṭar is unanimous in Cairo and Syria.²⁴⁵⁹

The succession document for al-Mu'taḍid II acknowledges the wisdom of God that created the caliphate to stand as the pillar of *aḥkām* to eliminate confusion:

God is alone in holding the power which completely revealed the full moon of the caliphate through the ascent of the Hashimites, thereby quenching the thirst of Islam by means of the Abbasid watering place (*siqāyat al-'Abbāsiyya*) [...] God mandated the dispatch of the family of [the Prophet's] house to explain every matter and obscure ambiguity.²⁴⁶⁰

Thus, the image of the caliphate that emerges in Mamluk documents is one grounded in Godly piety and fidelity to the *sharī'a* and its sources. The notion of *taqwā* in the documents appears to go beyond Quranic notions of fearing God and takes on the original social dimensions associated with the word which imply that the caliph was thought to have the role of caretaker of society (as a macrocosm of the tribe) as well as his classical role as a dutiful enforcer of religious law and *sharī'* morality.²⁴⁶¹

6. The Caliph Represents the Existing Order

Defining the precise authority of the Abbasid caliph in the Mamluk period was a thorny problem for many jurists as classical Islamic doctrine had known the caliph only as God's sole

²⁴⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 368-9.

²⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 346-7. In 824/1421 the Rasulid ruler al-Nāṣir Aḥmad received an announcement of Ṭaṭar's accession in Cairo. The brief document, penned by Ibn Ḥijja, begins by praising the Rasulid ruler and his lands while acknowledging that his relations with Ṭaṭar's predecessor, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, had been rife with "isolation and evil whispering" and was henceforth exchanged for "sociability and friendly speech." The document stresses Ṭaṭar's commitment to new transparency with Yemen and to his upholding of the *sharī'a* and general recognition of the status quo in Yemen, acknowledging al-Nāṣir Aḥmad as "the best *imām* for this community."

²⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 57-8.

²⁴⁶¹ See: Leonard Lewisohn, "Taḳwā" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 2004), Suppl., 781-5.

sovereign charged with leadership over the community.²⁴⁶² The understanding was essentially that the caliph made himself available to receive the obedience of the people, commanding their allegiance and wielding it for the cause of *jihād*. The caliph was also expected to command the loyalty of the military and the Mamluk amirs in the name of Islamic universalism.

For jurists and scribes familiar with the theories of the imamate's obligatory nature, the caliph's presence in the capital ought to have been enough to assure harmony in society. The *ḥamdala* of the succession contract for al-Mustakfī states that the noble mettle or fortitude (*himma*) of the caliph is sufficient to enable the *umma* to enjoy a life of relaxed simplicity.²⁴⁶³

When compared to the first investiture document for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr, the surviving fragment of the second, presumably more frantic, document written months later, contains fewer references to *jihād*, and more justifications for Baybars II as a bulwark against the corrosive influence of hereditary kingship. Tellingly, the second document wastes no time in addressing “the amirs of the Muslims and their armies.”²⁴⁶⁴ After urging all listeners to obey God and the Prophet, the document continues in the voice of the caliph and catalogues the offenses of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad whom he labels a blood-shedder and destroyer of Islamic unity who enables the enemies of Islam.²⁴⁶⁵ The document presents the caliph as a universal symbol committed to enforcing harmony and protecting Islamdom, even against a popular sultan.

An unmistakable depiction of the caliph as personification of the status quo appears in al-‘Umarī’s contract for al-Ḥākim II. The head of the chancery did not expect the caliph to embroil himself in the mundane affairs of Cairo’s government, in the hands of the amir Qawṣūn at that time. Rather, according to the document, the caliph should silently watch over affairs, serving as a magnet for *baraka* and interested in little more than accumulating blessings:

The caliph witnesses before God and His creation that he has established every man among the holders of Islamic authority (*kulla amri’ min wullāt al-umūr al-islāmiyya*) in his present position and that [the officeholder] may continue in office under the [protection of] the shade of the caliph’s shadow (*taḥta kanaḥi ḡilālihi*), according to the ranks of those in authority, divided amongst the dominions and frontiers on land and sea, east and west, near and far. All of them, be they [...] king, slave, or amir [...] those who are wazirs, qadis, and secretaries, those who work as scribes or accountants (*taḥqīq ḥisāb*), postal riders, tax collectors, [...] teachers and students in the *ribāṭs*, *zāwīyas* and *khānqās*, [...] and the rest of the office holders and stipendiaries. Those who receive a portion of their sustenance from the wealth of God, whether [their] right is known or unknown; every matter will continue according to precedent (*kull amrin ‘alā mā huwa ‘alayhi*), so that the caliph can beseech God for the best outcome and have it made clear to him what is before him.

²⁴⁶² Holt, “Structure of Government,” 44.

²⁴⁶³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:63.

²⁴⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65-6; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:263.

²⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

[...] The caliph seeks only the face of God, favoring none in terms of religion or legal right (*haqq*) [...] Everything which has come to pass thus far, is established according to the rule of God from that which God has instructed [the caliph] in, as well as [his father] Sulaymān [al-Mustakfī]. The caliph is unable to change any part of this, and continually expresses thanks to God for His blessings and thus the one who gives thanks receives reward.²⁴⁶⁶

The caliph's responsibility to society thus spelled out, al-ʿUmarī moves on to the obligation of the faithful toward their commander:

For you, O people, from the caliph, are integrity (*rushd*) and the clear proof [which he provides], and that which he summons you to is the path of his lord as wisdom and good counsel. Owed to the caliph [on your behalf] is obedience, for if the subjects did not uphold it, God would not accept their deeds, nor would the ocean be held back, nor the earth spread out or its mountains firmly fixed. There would be no agreement of opinion as to whom was the proper holder of rights, and the caliphate would come [to anyone] dragging the tails [of its robes].²⁴⁶⁷

The document explains that as caliphs come and go, society is to remain unchanged. Those who remain supporters of the caliph (who, according to the document, appear also to represent the interests of the powerful amirs of the sultanate) will be rewarded and those who abandon him will be forgotten. Regardless of rank, loyalty to the caliph is mandated upon all, and all men stand in truth before him, in what appears to be a reflection of the ethos of Mamluk court culture and chivalry as much as anything else which might be described as Islamic.

7. The Caliph Transmits the Will of Cairo Abroad

Investiture deeds and letters addressed to faraway lands are the best place to gauge ways by which the caliphate figured in the international relations of the Mamluk sultanate. In the early fourteenth century letter to the Rasulid al-Muʿayyad Dāwūd, the chancery presents the caliph as spokesman and admonisher, warning the Yemeni ruler that his infractions have angered Cairo and that he faces the threat of military invasion.²⁴⁶⁸ These shortcomings included his failure to send the Mamluks annual tribute as his father had done. Moreover, Dāwūd had stopped sending grain supplies to Mecca, detained Egyptian merchants, and perhaps most damning from the supposed point of view of the caliph, “no longer mentioned the name of the Abbasid caliph from atop the *minbars* during the Friday *khuṭba* and barred the caliph from “tying and untying.”²⁴⁶⁹ The voice of al-Mustakfī offers the possibility for reconciliation and warns against the grievous misstep of

²⁴⁶⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:327; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 397.

²⁴⁶⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:328-9; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 397.

²⁴⁶⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:154-5, 157; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:423-4, 425; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 3:259-60.

²⁴⁶⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:156; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:425; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 3:262.

abandoning the pledge of loyalty that Yemen had entered into with the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo:

It is not our intent to unleash an attack against whoever the tongue and heart pronounce the two testaments of faith, nor against whoever the reason and the heart obeys the imperious commandments of God [...] we are not of a mind to unsheathe swords except against those who have abandoned obedience to us, refused the book of God, and withdrawn from our *mubāyaʿa*.²⁴⁷⁰

The caliph orders, first, that Yemen and its people be made aware of his leniency, and second, that Dāwūd send a messenger to Cairo, who in deference to caliphal authority, will represent the Rasulid ruler, provide a satisfactory report of the situation in Yemen, and effectively restore relations with Cairo, “caring for the fruits of his compassion and mercy, after having planted the tree of obedience to the caliph, accompanied by large provisions [...] that should be sent annually to the public treasury.” The caliph likewise urges Dāwūd to send support and military aid in the struggle against the Mongols and to arrange for his troops to be at the disposal of the Mamluk sultan.²⁴⁷¹

Similarly the investiture deed for Muẓaffar Shāh of India affirms that the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaʿīn, after much prayer, has found the Delhi sultan suitable to receive control of affairs as the caliph’s guide and helper in India. Muẓaffar Shāh’s subjects, in distant India, are thus duty-bound to obey him as the rightful deputy of the Abbasid caliph.²⁴⁷²

8. Classical Expectations of the Caliph

Based on the preceding tradition of Sunni discourse on the imamate and its classical understanding of caliphal prerogatives, al-ʿUmarī appears to attribute several privileges to the caliph, including the commanding of mosque orators to publicly name the reigning sultan from the *minbars* so that the day “ring with prayers for them both.”²⁴⁷³ Moreover, he could order the striking of coins in both their names.

Al-ʿUmarī, a zealous campaigner for al-Ḥākim II against his cousin al-Wāthiq, ascribes duties to the caliph from earlier times, though these were not carried out under the Mamluks:

Every year, during the *ḥajj* season, the caliph is in charge of [God’s] worshippers. He encloses (with his kindness) the residents of the two holy cities and the gatekeeper of the Kaʿba (*sidānat bayt Allāh al-ḥaram*). He prepares the path according to habit and wishes to restore it to its initial state from times past. He will pour forth an

²⁴⁷⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:157-8; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:425; idem, *Maʿāthir*, 3:262-3.

²⁴⁷¹ Ibid. See also: Vermeulen, “Une lettre du Calife,” 369-70.

²⁴⁷² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:133; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, 433.

²⁴⁷³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:327-8; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 397.

overwhelming abundance onto these two *masjids*, and he will send to the third of them (in) Jerusalem a flowing cloud (*sāḳib al-ghamām*). He will be in charge of erecting (or maintaining) the tombs of the prophets - blessings of God be upon them - wherever they may be, and most are in Syria. Friday prayer and daily congregational prayers will continue among you according to their previous traditions. Whoever joins with the caliph during his reign will see an increase [in prosperity], and that which is delivered from the lands of the unbelievers will be placed securely into his hands.²⁴⁷⁴

Despite the gusto of al-ʿUmarī’s document, surely no one among the ruling Mamluk amirs was surprised that after the investiture, the actual duties of al-Ḥākim II were again limited to bestowing legitimacy on the sons of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the most powerful amirs during the next decade.²⁴⁷⁵ For the sake of exuberance, al-ʿUmarī could ascribe limitless religious duties to the caliph, but the constraints remained the same as they had been for al-Māwardī: as Commander of the Faithful, the caliph could merely delegate the heavy lifting for such matters to his subordinates. It was considered far more important that he endure as a nexus, both to the glorious past and to divine power, ensuring that such tasks would be achieved by his formal deputies in a broader notion of “caliphate” that also included the Mamluk sultan and the larger religious establishment -- a condominium of political and religious authority.

9. Advice for the Abbasid Caliph

Although many of the documents alluded to contemporary expectations of the Abbasid caliph in Mamluk society, few offered explicit advice. The succession document for al-Mustaʿīn, for example, contained sections of counsel for the newly seated caliph that tell us more about caliphal decorum than anything else. Its author warns al-Mustaʿīn that affairs can only be set right through good sense; deeds alone are useless if deemed inappropriate for the situation. The document encourages the use of sound opinion (*raʿyan ṣawāban*) as the source for judgments. The author also advises that the caliph should appeal to no precedent unless its legacy has proven consistently praiseworthy.²⁴⁷⁶ According to the author, among the qualities that make one fit for the caliphate, are that the appointee has long been awaiting the position, that he be the most faithful to its intended purpose, as well as the best in [offering] counsel.²⁴⁷⁷

Al-Mustaʿīn receives the recommendation that the best way for him to serve his subjects is to regularly seek the advice of those who ratified his selection as caliph: the electoral

²⁴⁷⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:329; al-Suyūṭī, *Taʾrīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 398.

²⁴⁷⁵ On the changing role of the *amīr kabīr* in the context of Mamluk politics in the mid-fourteenth century, see: Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 3 (1994): 383-4.

²⁴⁷⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:372; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 3:345.

²⁴⁷⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:373; idem, *Maʾāthir*, 3:346.

community of qadis, amirs, wazirs, '*ulamā*', the notables of the age, as well as his own relatives, the general population, and the governing audience.

The author also advises the caliph against relying solely on his lineage, and warns that only those obedient to God can enter paradise, and even an insubordinate Hashimite will not be spared from the flames of hell. The caliph must seek God as helper for guidance in accordance with the Qur'ān.²⁴⁷⁸

Most interestingly, al-Musta'īn as *walī al-ahd*, is told, even before his caliphate, to begin work on a worthy legacy. The document informs the caliph-to-be that his objective is to seek the face of God, and that he must be more than the prince of a noble house, and therefore do something, the like of which will bring good thoughts of him to the minds of all who hear his mention. His deeds must be better than those of his predecessors, and be well known enough to leave a mark on posterity, so that he might be remembered along with the great caliphs.²⁴⁷⁹

In explaining the duties of office to al-Musta'īn, the succession document states that as caliph, he is responsible for the land and subjects and that he has been honored by the prophetic line. The document advises him to follow the life example (*sīra*) of his ancestors, the rightly guided caliphs, and not deviate from it, in hope that his caliphate will lead him to be among the righteous *imāms* shaded beneath God's throne on the Day of Judgment.²⁴⁸⁰

Mamluk sources have left us a great deal of information with which to speculate on the expectations that the '*ulamā*' and sultans had for the caliphs. To be sure, the sultans required caliphs of great personal *baraka*, or better still, charisma, who would constantly offer prayers for the state as their highest calling. Above all, it was important that the caliphs not have a taste for the distracting details of politics and policymaking, a harsh and dangerous world best left to the sultans and their administrative retinues. Moreover, the caliphs had little time or strength to waste in excessive talking with either the citadel elite (*al-nās*) or the masses (*'amma*). The caliphs most valued by the Mamluks were the ones who did not dissipate their great powers by preoccupation with the *dunyā*. Instead, they were to maintain correct boundaries with the sultans and help maintain the state with their supplications -- just as their ancestor al-'Abbās had preserved the land with his prayers for rain.

²⁴⁷⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:376; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:352. See: Qur'ān 25:31, "Sufficient is your Lord as a guide and helper."

²⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁸⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:376; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:351. See: Qur'ān, 40:51-2.

D. Tradition and Continuity

We have already explored different understandings of the caliph's ability to provide a link to the family of the Prophet. Similarly, many caliphal documents of the Mamluk period sought to present an important relationship of analogy and continuity between the contemporary Abbasid caliphs and the Biblical prophets and earlier generations of caliphs. It is worth mentioning that in most cases, if a sitting caliph or sultan named in the documents were to share a proper name such as Dāwūd or Abū Bakr, the authors then provided various puns, allusions, and levels of meaning associated with the historical names.²⁴⁸¹

In the case of the caliph Sulaymān al-Mustakfī, many authors were quick to draw reference to the way in which the *Prophet* Sulaymān (Solomon) had begun his letter to the Queen of Sheba in verse 27:30 of the Qur'ān: "verily (this document comes) from Sulaymān in the name of God the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful."²⁴⁸² The second clause of the *ḥamdala* of the investiture deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr praises God in His arrangement of divine fate and for making manifest the secret (*sirr*) of sovereignty with the Abbasid imamate with sufficient testing from the two chosen ones, in this instance a likely reference to David and Solomon.²⁴⁸³

To bridge the gap between the prophet Solomon and the caliph Sulaymān al-Mustakfī, al-'Umarī suggests that Muḥammad's uncle al-'Abbās had received special portions of the prophetic heritage (*mīrāth al-nubuwwa*) which itself had been granted as an extension of Solomonian kingship (*al-mulk al-sulaymānī*).²⁴⁸⁴ In the Qur'ān, Solomon received special dominion over the winds and was taught the language of the birds (*manṭiq al-ṭayr*) to control them, which no prophet received after him.²⁴⁸⁵ For al-'Umarī, this is comparable to the Abbasid caliph of Cairo receiving news of remarkable events by way of courier pigeons and postal riders (*al-barīd*) and that he has received or absorbed some of the greatness of his father which helped to unite creation under his obedience. The robes of the Abbasid house (*libās Banī al-'Abbās*) furnished him with

²⁴⁸¹ In choosing the names of their own children (the *awlād al-nās* class), the Mamluks favored the names of prophets, members of Muḥammad's family, and the names of early caliphs. See: Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 276-7.

²⁴⁸² Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 8:263.

²⁴⁸³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:129; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:69.

²⁴⁸⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130, 9:326; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:324; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 396. In documents concerning the caliph Sulaymān al-Mustakfī as well as his sons al-Ḥākim II and al-Mu'taḍid I, some authors underscored the implication that the caliphate, to some extent, had absorbed the prototype of the kingship of the prophet Solomon who in the Qur'ān (verses 27:15-7), through God's leave, commanded mankind, *jinn*s, animals, and living creatures. Al-'Umarī in particular played with the idea that the concept of caliphal authority derived from the kingship of Solomon. It was convenient that al-Mustakfī shared a famous namesake as it allowed al-'Umarī to present Solomon as a precursor to the caliphs of the age. In the Qur'ān, Solomon is both a prophet and a mighty king, who represents a valid form of *mulk* which predated Muḥammad's bringing of the *sharī'a*. See: Ovamir Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 258.

²⁴⁸⁵ Qur'ān, 27:16-7.

that which fulfills their symbols of his noble ancestry and extends his shadow over the earth, over all the lands under [Muslim] sovereignty, including Baghdad in its entirety.²⁴⁸⁶

In three documents showcasing the authority of the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II, Ibn Ḥijja evokes the caliph’s namesake, Dāwūd, by citing the Quranic verse of the Davidian caliphate.²⁴⁸⁷ Ibn Ḥijja opened the investiture deed of Ṭaṭar with the verse:

Praise be to God who opened every door of justice by means of Abī al-Fath [al-Mu‘taḍid II] and rectified and made manifest every hidden thing and said: “O David, verily we have made you caliph on the earth,” and this (verse) indicates the nobility of the Davidian caliphate (*khilāfat dāwūdiyya*) both in posterity and at present, and connects to the Abbasid role of watering the pilgrims which has continued into the reign of al-Mu‘taḍid.²⁴⁸⁸

When succession of the caliphate passed from al-Mutawakkil to al-Musta‘īn, the author of the testamentary document, describing the caliph as “wrapped in the mantle (*burda*) of the office” by his father, continues the allusion to prophecy in Islam with the succession of Moses, Aaron, and John the Baptist:

[The caliph al-Musta‘īn] followed the life example of his father [al-Mutawakkil] in knowledge, followed his honorable legacy, and was comparable to him in nobility; whoever resembles his father engages not in wrongdoing (*man yushābih abahu fa-mā ḡalama*). God accepted the prayers of his father, granted [his request] and made [al-Musta‘īn] *walī* thereby making it possible for him to be set upon the earth to receive power (*ḥukm*) [as God gave to John the Baptist (Yaḥyā)]²⁴⁸⁹ and making it obligatory that there be for the Muslims at that time, a *walī* for their ‘*ahd*, a *walī* over their affairs to loosen and bind them, vouchsafing authority near and far, appointed as caliph during the lifetime of his father [to inherit the office] after him, and to proclaim and clarify the succession, reciting to him in the speech of delegation [as Moses said to Aaron]: “Take my place among my people and keep things right.”²⁴⁹⁰

Scribes similarly found avenues to evoke the glorious past if a reigning caliph (or sultan) shared his given name with a well-regarded Muslim ruler. In his deed for al-Ḥākim II, al-‘Umarī prays for a long reign for the caliph and for the increase of God’s mercies on his predecessors.²⁴⁹¹

²⁴⁸⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:326; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 396.

²⁴⁸⁷ A later reference to the *alqāb* of the caliphs al-Mutawakkil and al-Mu‘taḍid, followed by thanks for the destiny of the caliph Dāwūd who inherited the family office and again, emphasizes the name David by citing Qur’ān 38:26. See: Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 346-7, 367-8. The Davidian caliphate verse also appears in the succession document for al-Mu‘taḍid II. See: *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 57-8. As Gibb rightly points out, a jurist’s use of this verse immediately endows such a document with scriptural authority, suggesting that the authority of the caliph comes from God rather than the *umma*. See: “Constitutional Organization,” in *Law in the Middle East*, Vol. 1, *The Origin and Development of Islamic Law*, ed. Majid Khadduri and Herbert Liebensy (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 5.

²⁴⁸⁸ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 336.

²⁴⁸⁹ Qur’ān, 19:12.

²⁴⁹⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:373-4; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:347. See: Qur’ān, 7:142.

²⁴⁹¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:329; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 397-8.

Eager to draw powerful comparisons to symbolize the transfer of power between caliph and sultan in 741/1341, the composer Shihāb al-Dīn observed that the name of the incoming sultan was Abū Bakr, and the caliph, Aḥmad (in Arabic, a synonym of Muḥammad), and reached for the analogy that the caliph Aḥmad al-Ḥākim II, in stepping aside to bestow power on the young sultan Abū Bakr mirrors the prophet Muḥammad handing power and undefined (though non-prophetic) authority to the first caliph Abū Bakr on his death in 11/632.²⁴⁹² Another pairing of Muḥammad and Abū Bakr can be found in the document that named Muḥammad al-Mutawakkil the *walī al-‘ahd* of his father, Abū Bakr al-Mu‘taḍid. The *ḥamdala* lingers on the name Abū Bakr, who was “intimate [to the Prophet] in the cave (*anīs sayyid al-mursalīn fī al-ghār*).” The *ḥamdala* then praises the uncles of the Prophet, Ḥamza and al-‘Abbās, “two pure figures free of blemish or foulness.”²⁴⁹³

Inheriting formal authority from a modern representative of the Abbasid family left the Mamluk sultan eager to demonstrate continuity with the classical caliphate. The delegation clause of Ṭaṭar’s document states that in addition to his submission to the bonds of faith (*īmān*), a “necklace of accession (or fulfillment)” (*ṭawqu al-ijāba*) had been fastened to the sultan comprised of that which had been included by the Abbasid caliphate and stating that the Muslims bowed before him as the selected deputy.²⁴⁹⁴

The Arabic literary device of drawing analogy (*tashbīh* or *kināya*), in this case between prophets and non-prophets, may have been unsettling to more conventional Muslims who revered the prophets as inimitable bearers of God’s commands and messages, a far cry from the powerless caliphs of medieval Cairo. It is clear in the context of the pomp of the documents, however, that the authors saw nothing objectionable in likening the contemporary caliphs and sultans to the prophets and prestigious early companions of Muḥammad, whom they clearly viewed or otherwise sought to represent as the superior notables of their age, worthy of lofty and exclusive comparisons. Nevertheless, many people could appreciate a link, if only nominal, between contemporary caliphs and ancient prophets as chosen men of God. Although the remaining text of the brief document preserved by al-Suyūṭī confirming the transfer of the caliphate from Dāwūd al-Mu‘taḍid II to his brother Sulaymān al-Mustakfī II in 845/1441 makes no mention of either prophetic namesake, Ibn Iyās claims that contemporaries reveled in the fact, that in respect to the caliphate, “Solomon [had] inherited from David.”²⁴⁹⁵

²⁴⁹² Al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:127.

²⁴⁹³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:82.

²⁴⁹⁴ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā’*, 339.

²⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 2:230.

E. *Bay'a* and Society

The practice of the *bay'a*, the oath of allegiance between the caliph or king and any Muslim, was an Islamic institution adopted in part from the predecessors of the *umma*.²⁴⁹⁶ In later times through universal acceptance, it became the act of showing homage to the caliph whose election was ratified by a select electoral body (often having only one member), and then confirmed by the masses.²⁴⁹⁷ The invaders who supplanted the Abbasids of Baghdad, from the Buyids to the Seljuqs, adapted the *bay'a* as an important means to ensure loyalty among their supporters.²⁴⁹⁸

Bay'a ceremonies for the Fatimid caliphs of Cairo had been dazzling affairs, reports of which were sent to the provinces, and likely influenced Mamluk investiture ceremonial later on.²⁴⁹⁹ For all intents and purposes, the *bay'a* ceremony in Mamluk Egypt, often concluded at the accession of a new sultan or caliph, was the ritual expression of a mutual pledge of allegiance (*mubāya'a*) carried out for public recognition in the form of a traditional handclasp between investor and investee, and accompanied by an investiture document produced by the Mamluk chancery.²⁵⁰⁰

Among the jurists, Ibn Taymiyya emphasized that the *mubāya'a*, was a mutual oath of allegiance between the *imām* and the community, a contract meant to underscore obedience to God and the Prophet.²⁵⁰¹ Ibn Khaldūn interpreted the *bay'a* as a contract between the ruler (*amīr*) and the community, traditionally concluded by a handshake as if a financial transaction had been made.²⁵⁰² Al-Qalqashandī understood *bay'a* to be of profound importance to Islamic public law, comprising a number of elements including the public recognition of the successor as well as the composition and presentation of the accompanying document which confirmed his authority (but did not *grant* it, as only God had such power).²⁵⁰³ Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī believed the *bay'a* had prophetic origins which represented an unbroken chain linking the contemporary caliph and

²⁴⁹⁶ Watt, *Islamic Political Thought*, 6-9, 35-42; Emile Tyan, "Bay'a," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 1:1113-4.

²⁴⁹⁷ The understanding was that the key notables accepted the *bay'a* on behalf of the entire Muslim community, see: Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, 148.

²⁴⁹⁸ Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 51-2.

²⁴⁹⁹ Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 58, 63; idem, "Robes of Honor in Fatimid Egypt," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York, 2001), 225-39.

²⁵⁰⁰ On the various oaths made to the sultan at the time of succession, the *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) and the *ḥilf* (covenant linked personally to the ruler), see: Holt, "Position and Power," 241; Van Steenberghe, *Order Out of Chaos*, 22-6. See also: al-'Umārī, *Ta'rīf*, 209-15.

²⁵⁰¹ Lambton, *State and Government*, 148.

²⁵⁰² Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 241.

²⁵⁰³ Vermeulen, "La *bay'a* califale," 295.

his deputy, the Mamluk sultan, to the legacy of Muḥammad's leadership. In some ways, the *bay'a* offered notions of a physical connection to the Prophet by virtue of a symbolic handshake:

The Prophet (God's peace and blessings be upon him) was truly the master of the world; then, the caliphate passed to the *imām* Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, then the companions and caliphs (may God be pleased with all of them) inherited it in succession, until the present time when it is now [passed] through *mubāya'a* from the Commander of the Faithful, with the concurrence of the electoral community, the '*ulamā*', the pillars of the noble state, notable amirs in good standing, and the divinely-assisted armies.²⁵⁰⁴

Holt believed this passage suggested that sultans were invested with the entirety of the caliphate based on a lack of reports of the caliphs *receiving* pledges from the sultans after the mid-fourteenth century. Instead, according to Holt, most Mamluk chronicles mention that caliphs offered *bay'a* to the rulers as sultans. In the passage above, however, Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zahīrī appears to be using "caliphate" as a synonym for "imamate." Mamluk jurists and historians understood that the Mamluk sultans sought to establish themselves as successors to the imamate in the vein of the Rāshidūn, Umayyad, and early Abbasid caliphs. Reading it as a transfer of the "caliphate" in the classical sense is problematic, as the incarnation of the Abbasid caliphate under the Mamluks had long ceased to be a caliphate based on the prophetic model (*khilāfat al-nubuwwa*).²⁵⁰⁵

After Baybars's watershed establishment of the caliphate in Cairo, an Abbasid caliph was on hand at the accession of nearly every Mamluk sultan. Nevertheless, if Holt's hypothesis is correct, the historical caliphal investiture in the Mamluk period changed over the decades and by the mid-eighth/fourteenth century the dual, mutually exchanged oaths (*mubāya'a*) may have given way to a new development: the sultan, as acting *imām*, receiving the oath of allegiance from the Abbasid caliph (but only ever as sultan).²⁵⁰⁶ Beginning with the investiture of the

²⁵⁰⁴ Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zahīrī, *Kitāb zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Cairo: Dār al-ʿArab, 1988), 54.

²⁵⁰⁵ Holt's thesis was that the Mamluks, interested in stressing their continuity with the Ayyubids and Seljuqs, used a combination of the caliphal *bay'a* and the mention of the sultan in the *khutba* as proof that the ruler had been inaugurated in accordance with the rituals associated with traditional Muslim rulers. See: Holt, "Position and Power," 244-5; idem, "Structure of Government," 46; Linda S. Northrup, "The Bahārī Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250-1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 268; Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 344-5.

²⁵⁰⁶ Holt, "Some Observations," 504-5 note 9; idem, "Structure of Government," 44-7; idem, "Succession in the Early Mamluk Sultanate," 147; Van Steenberghe, *Order Out of Chaos*, 24 note 26; Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 343-5; idem, "Legitimität durch Erzählung: Ayyubidsche und kalifale Legitimation mamlukischer Herrschaft in der populären *Sīrat Baibars*," in *Die Mamlūken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann, 1942-1999*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja

Qalawunid al-Nāṣir Aḥmad in 742/1342, the caliph, according to the sources, in a seemingly one-way transfer of power, is described as giving the sultan authority through *bay'a* (*bāya'uhu al-khalīfa bi-al-salṭana*). Holt isolated instances of the phrase used in various sources, observing that most Mamluk chronicles, with some regularity from the reign of the Qalawunids through to the Circassians, only record that the caliph offered homage to the sultan.²⁵⁰⁷ It may be that the chroniclers, aware of the sultan's authority as acting *imām*, simply recorded it as convenient shorthand for the ceremony rather than saying both caliph and sultan exchanged power as they had in the early Baḥrī period.

Holt appears to have misinterpreted the use of the phrase as the embodiment of a new doctrine: namely that the caliph, in a surprising turnaround of “their constitutional positions” and a noteworthy break with the Islamic doctrine of Sunni jurists, now invested the Mamluk sultan with the *totality* of his caliphate.²⁵⁰⁸ Even if the caliph only gave *bay'a* to the Mamluk sultan, the relationship of delegation occurring in the later Circassian era documents maintained the notion that the caliph delegated everything “beyond the throne of his caliphate” (but not the titular office itself) to the sultan. From the Arabic of the chronicles cited by Holt, it is also evident that the caliph granted the sultan only the sultanate (*bāya'uhu bi-al-salṭana*) through the *bay'a*. The developing pageantry of the investiture ceremonies, which may well have devolved into a one-way *bay'a* for the sultan, comprised a different though interrelated symbolic world than that of the documents. The language of the clauses of delegation contradict any notion that the sultan received the entire caliphate through the *bay'a*. While the caliphate was notoriously stripped of all power, the idea of completely stripping the caliph of his office, which was more like a trust given to the Abbasid family, would have been objectionable to the *'ulamā'*, amirs, and bureaucrats who supported the routines and protocols of Mamluk ceremonial.²⁵⁰⁹

The caliph maintained symbolic importance throughout the Qalawunid period, although the primary realization of the sultan's authority likely came in the *bay'a* of the army which was “reminiscent of the regime's origins and indicative of the military's key political

Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2003), 265-6; Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: The Turkish Mamlūk Sultanate (648-784/1250-1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk Sultanate (784-923/1382/1517),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2, *The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 240.

²⁵⁰⁷ Holt, “Some Observations,” 504. See also: Baki Tezcan, “Hanafism and the Turks in al-Ṭarasūsī's *Gift for the Turks* (1352),” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 15 (2011): 70-1.

²⁵⁰⁸ Holt suggests that “the caliph was no longer regarded as even nominally the sovereign of the Islamic community, but was assimilated in status to the four chief judges.” See: “Structure of Government,” 45.

²⁵⁰⁹ Broadbridge, “Diplomatic Conventions,” 115. See also Northrup's discussion of caliphal delegation to Qalāwūn: *From Slave to Sultan*, 166-74.

involvement.”²⁵¹⁰ The later annals of Mamluk history mention very little about the *bay‘a* ceremonies, and historians note only that they occurred in the presence of the caliph and qadis, though not infrequently that the caliphs continued to offer homage to the sultans.²⁵¹¹ This was little more than the enactment of the formal delegation of caliphal powers encapsulated by every sultan’s investiture deed. If indeed the Mamluks dispensed with the mutual *mubāya‘a*, while a noteworthy departure from their early tradition, it became implicit in the formal transfer of authority and did not seem to cause alarm among any of the jurists or historians who wrote about it.

The symbolic position of the *bay‘a* is heavily weighted in many of the documents examined in this chapter, particularly Ibn al-Qaysarānī’s investiture deed for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and al-‘Umarī’s succession deed for al-Ḥākim II.²⁵¹² Recurring themes in investiture document rhetoric are the obligatory nature and social ramifications of the *bay‘a/mubāya‘a* between the caliph and the sultan, as well as the sultan and the community. Formally, the ‘*ulamā*’ and bureaucrats presented the existing *bay‘a* as a prerequisite that guaranteed the protection and supportive intervention of God in society.²⁵¹³ It was to be a profound source of social cohesion and public order; in its absence, society faced internal chaos and outside invaders. It ensured the active participation of God in community affairs, first by leading the *umma* to the proper *bay‘a* (and the best men to uphold it), and then by protecting the abiders of the sacred contract who offered obedience.²⁵¹⁴ For chancery workers and religious scholars such as al-‘Umarī, this obedience was the heart of the pact between the caliph and the people.²⁵¹⁵

In his ‘*ahd* for Qalāwūn, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir portrays the *mubāya‘a* as an act of worship (‘*ibāda*) in which the recipient of the community’s allegiance (in this case Qalāwūn) occupies the

²⁵¹⁰ Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos*, 24.

²⁵¹¹ By the start of the fifteenth century, Ibn Khaldūn concedes that the traditional handclasp had been replaced by the “Persian custom” of kissing the feet, lower garment or earth before the ruler. See: *Muqaddima*, 241. During the reign of Jaqmaq (842-57/1438-53) Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī states that in *bay‘a* ceremonies, only the caliph and sultan locked hands as a unique privilege of their stations. See: *Zubdat*, 86.

²⁵¹² Deed for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:59-68; idem, *Ma‘āthir*, 3:60-71. Deed for al-Ḥākim II: *Ṣubḥ*, 9:320-31; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 392-9.

²⁵¹³ According to al-‘Umarī, God provided direct leadership to the Muslims, by guiding the community towards realizing the *bay‘a*, thereby participating in the affairs of the community. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 393.

²⁵¹⁴ To this effect, the documents frequently cite Qur’ān 48:10: “Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad] -- are actually pledging allegiance to God. The hand of God is over their hands. So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself. And he who fulfills that which he has promised God -- He will give him a great reward.” Evoking this verse cast the contemporary *bay‘a* ceremony as a fundamental religious rite.

²⁵¹⁵ Indeed al-‘Umarī reminds his listeners/readers: “every one of you has entered under the protection of the caliph and his obedience and the obligations of the *bay‘a* are incumbent upon him.” Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:330; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 398-9.

position of the Prophet. God bestowed control over the affairs of creation to the Prophet's lineage (i.e. the Abbasids) and the caliph had invested his control in another to uphold and regulate the affairs of Islam. Nevertheless, the caliph retains relevance as the petitioner of divine assistance:

It is necessary that the one who has the satisfactory *mubāya'a* on the necks of the Muslims (*al-umma al-Muḥammadiyya*) [...] has, as his right, the inherited position of prophethood, and whoever rectifies through it every lawful [delegation of] office (*wilāyat shar'iyya*), takes its contract in hand with strength. Whomever is the caliph of the age and time, from whose prayers descend victory upon you [in the form of] the companions of Islam (*mu'āshir al-Islām*)-- the angels of divine assistance, from [the caliph's] lineage is the lineage of your Prophet-- peace and blessings be upon him.²⁵¹⁶

In the deed of al-Ashraf Khalīl, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir asserts a widespread acceptance for the arrangement and comments on the new roles of caliph and sultan:

The *bay'a* [of al-Ashraf Khalīl] took place engulfed in acceptance, while the enemies called [the *bay'a*] one made through submission and fear [of the sultan]. Thanks was given for this deed, which, after the caliphs had made sultans of the kings, one of the sultans then appointed the designated successors (*wullāt al-'ahd*), caliph after caliph.²⁵¹⁷

In explaining the significance of the contract, the investiture deed of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad claims that contracted agreements (*mu'āhad*) in Islam are meant to prosper through the conclusion of the agreement, and that through the *mubāya'a*, God unites and organizes the community in guidance and concord. Ibn al-Qaysarānī, after citing Qur'ān 48:10, gives thanks to God for the act of the *bay'a* and praises the caliphs for carrying it out.²⁵¹⁸

It is clear that many writers saw an enormous significance in the *bay'a* ceremony, particularly in the interest of coherent governance. The first investiture deed for Baybars al-Jāshinkīr states that its purpose was to organize the “pearl necklaces” of the interests of sovereignty and the dominions (*'uqūd maṣāliḥ mulk al-mamālik*).²⁵¹⁹

The lengthiest discourse on the ties of both the *bay'a* and *'ahd* to natural order and society can be found in the introductory protocol of al-'Umarī's deed for al-Ḥākim II. Most investiture deeds emphasize the notion of enforcing rights, and al-'Umarī opens by citing God's commandment (Qur'ān 4:58) that trusts must be delivered to those who are entitled to them and that all Muslims must fulfill contracts.²⁵²⁰ Like the earlier deed of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the *'ahd*

²⁵¹⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:118; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:132.

²⁵¹⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:117-8; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:169.

²⁵¹⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:59-61; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:60-5.

²⁵¹⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya*, 8:128; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:69.

²⁵²⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:60; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:63.

for al-Ḥākim II cites Qur'ān 48:10, which references the so-called “Pledge of Good Pleasure” (*bay'at al-riḍwān*) made between the Prophet and 1,400 of his followers beneath a tree prior to the Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyya in 6/628.²⁵²¹

In praise of the *bay'a* between the caliph and the *umma*, al-'Umarī describes it as “a *bay'a* of acceptance (*riḍwān*), beneficence (*iḥsān*), and contentment²⁵²² testified to by the group (*al-jamā'a*) [of electors representing the *umma*] just as God (*al-raḥmān*) testifies to it. [It is] a *bay'a*, the contents of which are compulsory upon the necks [of those concerned], and the good news of which hovers above the horizon [...] It is a *bay'a* the lineage (*nasab*) of which will improve the *umma*,²⁵²³ and which bestows blessings [...] Kindness (*al-rifāq*) flows through [the *bay'a*], and groups of heavenly bodies compete in the basin of the galaxy (‘*alā ḥawḍ al-majarra*) to be in proper concord with it.”²⁵²⁴

Mamluk authorities comprised of the “men of the pen” and “men of the turban” (the bureaucratic and religious sectors respectively) viewed the existing contract between the ruler and the community as a sign of the community’s divine protection. As al-'Umarī observed, “[The] *bay'a* guarantees tranquility (*al-salāma*) in religious and worldly affairs (*fī al-dīn wa-al-dunyā*), [as it is] a *bay'a* sound (*ṣaḥīḥa*) [and carried out in accordance with the] *sharī'a*.”²⁵²⁵ The conclusion of the latest *bay'a* also announced the moment in which God renewed blessings (*ni'māt*) for the subjects, thus perpetuating His original mercy of bestowing divine guidance on the community, by establishing power among the children of the Prophet’s uncle.²⁵²⁶ For al-'Umarī, the role of God in caliphal and community affairs is undeniable, as it is God who selected the caliph and raised his position high enough to receive the *bay'a*, and then ordered every subservient holder of power to obey the 'ahd by upholding the *imām*’s contract, according to the tradition of the Prophet, “even if [the *imām* were to be] a black slave.”²⁵²⁷

For al-'Umarī and his contemporaries, the *bay'a*, like the caliphate itself, not only resulted in tranquility for the lands of Islam, but was inextricably connected to order in the natural world as well. A proper *bay'a* between the *imām*, the sultan as his delegate, and the political

²⁵²¹ “Those who give you *bay'a*, are in fact, pledging *bay'a* to God. God’s hand is over their hands. Then, whoever breaks his pledge breaks it to his own detriment, and whoever fulfils the covenant (‘*ahd*) he has made with God, He will grant him a great reward.”

²⁵²² Al-Suyūṭī’s version has *wa-jam'iyya riḍā* instead of *bay'a riḍā*.

²⁵²³ The version preserved by al-Suyūṭī records it as “a *bay'a* which God uses to repair the *umma*” (*bay'a yaṣliḥ Allāh bi-hā al-umma*).

²⁵²⁴ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:320-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

²⁵²⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

²⁵²⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:370; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:341.

²⁵²⁷ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:370-1; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:342-3.

community allowed “the clouds to part and the full moon to shine brightly.”²⁵²⁸ Later documents also presented the *bay‘a* as balm for the discontent of society.²⁵²⁹

Praised for its unmistakable power to unite disparate groups of society around common (religious) goals, the *bay‘a* obtained its authority from the consensus of the group (*ijmā‘*), and was thus binding upon all the believers.²⁵³⁰ The electors (*arbāb al-‘aqd wa-al-ḥall*), often referring to amirs and various members of the ‘*ulamā‘*’, united on the *bay‘a* to represent a spirit of inclusiveness among the *umma*. As an act of worship, knowing that God had the control, society was meant to put its trust in the *bay‘a*.²⁵³¹

In hyperbolized rhetoric, al-‘Umarī makes the case for the supreme spiritual significance of the *bay‘a*, which asserted Cairo’s primacy as the capital of the Islamic world; eclipsing even Mecca itself, in which pilgrims, he claims, are preoccupied with thoughts of the caliphate and the blessings of the ‘*ahd*’ even as they circumambulate the Ka‘ba.²⁵³² In al-‘Umarī’s conception, the covenant is concluded with the denizens of the heavens and the earth acting in concert. The will of God is manifested through the *bay‘a*, which the author of the document makes no effort to disguise as the most dire interest of Islam.²⁵³³ If nothing else, the attitude of bureaucrats such as al-‘Umarī and al-Qalqashandī towards post-1258 caliphal delegation proves that the matter was hardly a trivial one by the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century.

Ibn Ḥijja’s investiture deed for Ṭaṭar discusses the relationship between the sultan, as deputy and proxy of the caliph, and the people. Again, it was no small concern for the scribal secretary:

Our master the sultan receives [universally obligatory obedience] with the perfumed breezes of acceptance and heeds the advice of the caliphal contract (‘*ahd al-khilāfa*’) “humbled and nearly bursting through the fear of God.”²⁵³⁴

Ibn Ḥijja’s subsequent investiture deed for Barsbāy revisits the primacy of the *bay‘a*, noting that the companions of the Prophet had abandoned commercial and other interests on the

²⁵²⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 392.

²⁵²⁹ The announcement declaring the accession of Ṭaṭar to Yemen claims the *mubāya‘a* between the Mamluk sultan and the Abbasid caliph al-Mu‘taḍid II has set right the disorder among the lands and slaves of God. See: Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā‘*, 346-7.

²⁵³⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:320-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 392. This idea follows the classical juristic theory, but Ovamir Anjum has argued that following the conception of al-Māwardī, the wider community was entirely removed from the equation until its reintroduction in the political thought of Ibn Taymiyya. See: *Politics, Law, and Community*, 121, 133-4.

²⁵³¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321-2; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 393-4.

²⁵³² Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:321; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 393.

²⁵³³ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:325-6; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā‘*, 395.

²⁵³⁴ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā‘*, 340; Qur’ān, 59:21.

day of the *bay'a* in order to purchase the hereafter through the good deeds implicit in their participation.²⁵³⁵

Concluding a sound agreement with the caliph granted the sultan power to protect his government. After the *ḥamdala*, the deed of Barsbāy states that the '*ahd*' emanates from the caliph al-Mu'taḍid II, who was so beloved by God, that no one was permitted to fight him, obstruct him from receiving his dues, or even live in a land that failed to recognize him.²⁵³⁶ Ibn Ḥijja spells out the arrangement: "the sun of the '*ahd*' does not shine except with the light of the caliphate, and the sultan is shielded by the unassailable Davidian armor of the '*ahd*', assigned to him by the caliph and guaranteed by God." In praising the '*ahd*' of Barsbāy, Ibn Ḥijja writes of the influence it will carry as it is announced to distant rulers whom he lists by name: the Rasulid al-Nāṣir Aḥmad of Yemen, Temūr's heir Shāhrukh, and even various unnamed rulers of China and other locales east and west.²⁵³⁷

For client rulers interested in Cairo's blessing, document writers presented fidelity to the *bay'a* and the '*ahd*' as inarguably binding. The investiture deed for Muẓaffar Shāh is full of Quranic reminders about the dangers of withdrawing from his agreement with the Abbasid caliph of Cairo:

Those who take a small price by [breaking] the covenant of God and their oaths, for them there is no share in the Hereafter, and God will neither speak to them, nor will He look towards them on the Day of Judgment nor will He purify them. For them is a painful punishment. (3:77)

Those who fulfill their covenant when they enter into a covenant [...] Those are the ones who are truthful, and those are the God-fearing. (2:177)²⁵³⁸

The document indicates that later generations emulating the Prophet's *bay'a* will be duly honored by his successor, the caliph. The document again emphasizes the importance of the contract by asserting that one of the kings of earth is only invited to participate in the prophetic '*ahd*' once the honor of his regime has become common knowledge. Essentially, in the theoretical world of the investiture deeds, both God and the caliph decide which of the non-Mamluk rulers is worthy of entering into the contract.²⁵³⁹

²⁵³⁵ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 368.

²⁵³⁶ Ibid.

²⁵³⁷ Ibid., 369. During the reign of Barsbāy, the Timurid Shāhrukh claimed to be the head of the Muslim *umma* and repeatedly tried to send a *kiswa* for the Ka'ba. It may be possible that the chancery subtly sought to minimize the importance of the Timurids in particular by lumping them in as "local rulers" of little consequence. See above, pp. 168-70.

²⁵³⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:131-2; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 430-2.

²⁵³⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:132; Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 432.

F. Mamluk Documents as Communication for a Society of Discourse

Medieval Egyptian society, very much a microcosm of the diverse communities and vast networks of interaction that made up the pre-modern Islamic world, was bound by social legitimation, boundary definition, and perhaps most importantly for our present purposes, “the shared sources of the Islamic experience, which provide the basis for mutually intelligible discourse among all who identify themselves as Muslims within the Dār al-Islām.”²⁵⁴⁰ In what amounts to further evidence of the interrelationship between literary forms and social organization,²⁵⁴¹ the caliphal documents, though produced by the elite to address itself, reflected an ongoing discourse that transcended social classes in Mamluk society. Through their composition, as well their “performance” at public assemblies, the investiture and succession documents produced by the bureaucracy addressed amirs and ‘*ulamā*’, as well as the masses, conveying the important message that the basic tenets of Islam were being upheld in Mamluk territory. Thus, all subjects might rest easy knowing that the administration remained in good hands, and the religious class in particular would be reassured that regardless of the individual occupying the sultan’s chair, the criteria which made the state recognizably “Islamic” would endure.

Much of the rhetoric, though largely formal language linked to tradition, demonstrates the existence of a very real current that demanded that the Abbasid caliphate be allowed to maintain significance in everyday Mamluk society. Indeed, deeply rooted loyalty to both the caliphate as institution and the Abbasid family was woven into the social fabric. Understanding this point allows us to begin a discussion of its place in a wider assessment of Mamluk culture both inside and outside the citadel. Discourse about the authority of the caliphate was ongoing even then, and it was invigorated every time a new caliph or sultan appeared on the political landscape. Investiture ceremonies, whenever described in the sources, often include mention of an ostentatious reading of the investiture deed followed by a parade through town. The event itself was very much a social practice in which listeners/readers among the populace became engaged in a communal discourse about leadership and authority and the extent to which contemporary models maintained ties to history and tradition. The documents are neither solely pragmatic nor solely literary, as they were composed with the specific purpose of communicating an official change at the highest levels of government. They were intended to send a message, be it a restatement of the Mamluk government’s *raison d’être*, or a reminder that *jihād* would continue,

²⁵⁴⁰ John O. Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Islamic Studies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (SAGE: Los Angeles, 2010), 7-8.

²⁵⁴¹ Van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid Discourse,” 2.

or merely the notion that everyone in society (including the caliph and sultan themselves) would receive the rights they were entitled to under the *sharīʿa*.

Alluding to the caliphate in their documents allowed Mamluk officials to make their own contributions to an ongoing dialogue on authority in Islamic society. The documents also provided a way for each branch of the Mamluk system of government to reiterate and announce its importance to the others. The documents, which contained so much about the duties, rights, and respect owed to the sultan, were particularly aimed at his former peers who now had to be subordinates. The *ʿulamāʾ* in their turn were occupied with organizing and supervising *bayʿa* ceremonies, thereby injecting the state with its religious authenticity. The bureaucracy, responsible for the documents themselves, was given a platform to present itself as the mouthpiece or the “noble gates” of the caliphate or the sultanate. If they addressed how the change in the caliphal or sultanic office came to pass, it was also in their power to spin recent political events one way or another.

As far as rhetoric about the Abbasid caliphate was concerned, it does not appear to have been part of an exchange of ideas so much as a reminder and affirmation of history and tradition. Its social function was essentially to provide comfort and peace of mind. It allowed listeners/readers to feel close to the Prophet and his uncle and the earliest Muslims and thus provided a powerful emotional component. Elites selected to participate in the physical act of the *bayʿa*, received the exclusive privilege of re-enacting the Prophet’s *bayʿa* with his followers more than six hundred years earlier. Evoking important personalities of Islamic history and pre-history was meant to ease the consciences in the matter of new office-holders coming to roost in socio-political positions that were profoundly more important to the collective culture than any one man. The rhetorical devices used by the documents, when seen in the context of their immediate function, were a way to ignite passions.²⁵⁴² They provided the opportunity for Mamluk society to engage the past and audit its own legacy as a successor not only to Abbasid Baghdad, but also to Muḥammad’s Medina.

Conclusion

In the classical theory of the caliphate, authority was believed to emanate from the community at large, though by Mamluk times this contention had become hard to maintain. The structure of most sultanic investiture documents immediately divested the caliphate of its authority while making it clear that only powers “beyond the throne of the caliphate” had been

²⁵⁴² Bauer, “Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” 111.

reassigned, and that an imprecise residual authority remained for the Commander of the Faithful in medieval Cairo.

An overarching theme of sultanic and caliphal investiture documents in the Mamluk period concerns protection of the Muslim community (often through offensive and defensive *jihād*) and through the upholding of existing socio-political institutions such as the *'ahd* or *bay'a/mubāya'a* as well as the *sharī'a*.²⁵⁴³ In their own view, the Mamluk sultans were the ultimate war leaders defending the Muslim community against existential threats.²⁵⁴⁴ The documents succeeded in formalizing the stripping of the caliph's power and the transfer of his authority to the Mamluk sultan, leaving little beyond a symbolic role for the caliph.

Deeds of investiture are useful in helping to ascertain the Mamluk elite's expectations for both the men and the office of the contemporary Abbasid caliphate. Recent scholarship has argued that the documents and commentary preserved by al-Qalqashandī hold little value for the Mamluk period as they fail to reflect the reality and actual practice of the times. Concluding that the caliph was only used to regularize the palace coups of new sultans, one historian suggested that significance claimed for the *bay'a* and the caliphate in Mamluk *inshā'* literature were evidence that the imagination of Sunni Islam went far beyond sensibility, and that a disconnect existed between collective conscience and reality.²⁵⁴⁵

While little actual authority remained to the caliphate, the office remained essential in regard to legitimacy and ceremonial. If reality is based on expectation and perception, the times and the Mamluk court required the caliphate to have importance, the elite perceived it as such, and thus it was. Just as the relics of Catholic or Muslim shrines enjoyed importance based on expectations of the people making pilgrimage to them, the caliphs similarly manifested a great power in court ceremonial and chancery documents simply because the Mamluk collective conscience expected no less. It was certainly theatre, but the beholders saw far more than the crass legitimization of the new sultan's brute force. In essence, the caliph and the *bay'a* he offered mattered because the people of the time *believed* that it did. For his part, the individual caliph, by virtue of his official dignity, was deemed too sacred to deal with the unpleasant business of restraining rebels, adjudicating in legal matters or otherwise engaging in the affairs of running the government. This is not apologia, merely an explanation that the caliph occupied his own place in society, diminished as it was *vis-à-vis* the standards of the High Caliphate, though vindicated by his delegates' upholding of Islamic law and establishment of prayers. This resulted

²⁵⁴³ The documents use various synonyms for protection and preservation, including: *ḥimāya*, *ṣiyāna*, and *ḥifẓ*.

²⁵⁴⁴ Holt, "Position and Power," 247.

²⁵⁴⁵ Vermeulen, "La *bay'a* califale," 301.

in the protection “of what was perceived to be an Islamic political structure with a military structure whose organisation was not, perhaps, inherently Islamic.”²⁵⁴⁶

Just as the sultans and ‘*ulamā*’ found uses for the caliph’s authority to serve their own interests, so too did bureaucrats. Acting as the “public relations” men of their times, scribal secretaries often forged titulature and protocol in chancery manuals.²⁵⁴⁷ Al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ* deliberately includes numerous references to the history of the caliphate, its accompanying titles, dignities, and protocol, as a way to perpetuate the institution and instruct future secretaries on how to make use of it in Mamluk politics. As it had in the past, the caliphate played an important role in furnishing the Mamluk chancery with old caliphal flair as the “sultanic gates” (*abwāb al-sulṭānī*). Al-Qalqashandī comments that standard practice for a Mamluk governor or foreign prince responding to correspondence from the Mamluk chancery included addressing it with the regnal *nisba* of the reigning caliph as well as the sultan. The chancery was the mode for conveying messages from the holders of power and so it was not uncommon for it to be referenced in documents or addressed in letters as occupying a lofty position by virtue of its prestigious position as mouthpiece for the decrees of the Abbasid caliph and his deputy in theory, the Mamluk sultan.²⁵⁴⁸

The documents perpetuate a somewhat fluid understanding of sultanate and caliphate that does not seem to abide by the classical conceptions of those offices. The offices are clearly separate from the individuals and it was indeed possible for a Mamluk sultan named in the document to be understood as the *imām* of the time.²⁵⁴⁹ The precise setting adds some spin to the rhetoric, however, as investiture deeds for sultans imply that the imamate has been vacated by the caliph and is up for grabs in a way that can be applied to the sultans, while succession documents for the caliphs still allude to the idea that the imamate is only available for a caliph selected from the Abbasid family. That notions of caliphate and imamate are interchangeable in the writing of jurists as well as in investiture deeds, complements the notion, dating to the time of al-Māwardī if not earlier, that the office was far more important than the man (or men?) who held it at any given time.

²⁵⁴⁶ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 167.

²⁵⁴⁷ See for example: Nakhjavānī, *Dastūr al-kātib*, 1:124-40.

²⁵⁴⁸ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6:122, 10:6, 11:72. For an example, see: *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130 in which a petitioner in Syria responds to a chancery letter from Cairo by praying for God to lengthen the days of the noble *dīwān*, adding to it a string of titles reflecting the Abbasid caliphate: *al-mawlawī*, *al-sayyidī*, *al-nabawwī*, *al-imāmī*, *al-ḥākimī*. See also the examples in the investiture deed for Baybars: Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 103; Ibn Nāzir al-Jaysh, *Tathqīf*, 7-8.

²⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 10:65; idem, *Ma’āthir*, 3:71.

The ways in which scribes made use of the Abbasid caliphate accommodated the idea that it comprised more than just an office and title. Chancery administration and bureaucracy proved to be an important part of the sultan's state and the caliphate figured into it directly. Much of the official protocol associated with investiture ceremonies, Abbasid and otherwise, was "codified, reinforced, and perpetuated" by chancery scribes who provided a link between protocol and politics.²⁵⁵⁰ It would not make sense for scribal secretaries to downplay the Abbasid caliphate or amplify the true nature of its political impotence. Instead, many *kuttāb* appear to have accepted the reality to a certain degree, but continued to bolster the caliphate in documents, insisting on its proper protocol, and appealing to important precedents, as a way to check the sultanate and boost the power of the bureaucracy; the grand *dīwān* that represented itself as the "gates of the caliphate."²⁵⁵¹ After all, just as it did for every other branch of Mamluk government, the Abbasid caliphate ideally underwrote the authority of the bureaucracy as a formal sector of the sultan's *dawla*. Thus the *kuttāb* could scarcely afford not to be advocates of the caliphate's unassailability, enshrining its ceremonial, and preserving the importance of deferring to it. The bureaucracy depended on its ability to compose these documents and it was important that they maintained a culture of accountability and deference to caliphal authority as a point of departure for the authority of the sultan and his administration.

²⁵⁵⁰ Broadbridge, "Diplomatic Conventions," 115.

²⁵⁵¹ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 7:130; idem, *Ma'āthir*, 3:324.

Chapter Six:
Conclusions:
Approaching a More Nuanced Image of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

I. The Historical Placement of the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo

Caliphal Continuity in the Mamluk Sultanate

Abbasid prestige proved vital in advancing the image of Cairo as the new Islamic capital and base of Sunni orthodoxy.²⁵⁵² As early as the Umayyad era, Muslim scholars had embraced the concept of unbroken continuity in Islamic history, consciously rejecting any deviation as blameworthy innovation, such as the notion of *not* having a caliph (or later still, one who was not an Abbasid).²⁵⁵³ Support for the ongoing universal authority of the Abbasid caliphate legitimized the Mamluk sultanate as a classical Islamic polity and recast the sultan as the nominal reviver, servant, and associate of the caliph's government.

In many ways incorporation of caliphal authority was a natural extension of a general Mamluk proclivity towards establishing themselves as the civilizational heirs of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad. On a cultural level, modern studies have identified ways in which Mamluk architecture attempted to emulate its Abbasid forerunners,²⁵⁵⁴ Abbasid *furūsiyya* manuals had great influence on Mamluk equestrian arts,²⁵⁵⁵ and the designs and motifs of Abbasid textiles, ceramics, and official garb were also absorbed by the Mamluks.²⁵⁵⁶ Mamluk belletrists and poets

²⁵⁵² After the Mongol invasions Cairo became the cultural and intellectual capital of what Hodgson identified as a "new cultural zone" comprised of North Africa, Egypt, the Sudanese lands, Arabia, and the Fertile Crescent with Arabic as its chief literary language. See: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 189. Indeed, Cairo would enjoy preeminence as the seat of Sunni Islam until the Ottomans remade Constantinople into their capital after 1453. See also: Jonathan P. Berkey, "Culture and Society During the Late Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume I, Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 377, 380-1.

²⁵⁵³ On this imperative during the Umayyad period, see: G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750* (London: Routledge, 2000), 18. This opinion seems to have changed in later times, however, as the eighteenth century Egyptian Mālikī jurist Abī al-Barakāt Aḥmad al-Dardīr (d. 1201/1786-7), for example, claimed that it was not mandatory for an Abbasid to hold the caliphal office. See: *al-Sharḥ al-ṣaghīr 'alā aqrab al-masālik ilā madhhab al-Imām Mālik* (Egypt, 1972-4), 4:188-9. I thank Mohammad Fadel for this reference.

²⁵⁵⁴ Jonathan Bloom, "Mamluk Art and Architectural History: A Review Article," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 43.

²⁵⁵⁵ Shihab al-Sarraf, "Mamluk *Furūsīyah* Literature and Its Antecedents," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2004): 141-200.

²⁵⁵⁶ L. A. Mayer, "Some Remarks on the Dress of the Abbasid Caliphs in Egypt," *Islamic Culture* 17, no. 1 (1943): 36-8; idem, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 12-4; Bethany Walker, "Rethinking Mamluk Textiles," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 181. This contention, however, should in no way diminish the other powerful influences on the Mamluk period coming particularly from the administrative and ceremonial practices of earlier Fatimid, Seljuq, and Ayyubid rulers. For some remarks on the transition from Fatimid to Mamluk investiture ceremonial, see: Jo Van Steenbergen, "Ritual,

also drew heavily from eighth and ninth century models of Abbasid prose and poetry.²⁵⁵⁷ The Mamluks similarly adopted the traditional Abbasid role as protectors and facilitators of the *hajj* pilgrimage and the holy cities of the Hijāz.²⁵⁵⁸

Forging links with Abbasid Baghdad presented unique opportunities to the Mamluk rulers. Lavish investiture ceremonies for the first Abbasid caliphs of Cairo allowed Mamluk officials and scholars to place great emphasis upon the authenticity of their genealogies.²⁵⁵⁹ From the Mamluk point of view, such affairs, including robing rituals, provided the impression of continuity with the imperial past that also diverted attention from the rivalries among the Mamluk ruling class.²⁵⁶⁰

Some Mamluk historians presented the Mamluk “warrior-sultans” as the logical political and military successors of the caliphs of Baghdad.²⁵⁶¹ Various sultans had their own understanding of this, a point made clear by al-Ashraf Khalīl’s epithet, “Reviver of the Abbasid State” (*muḥyī al-dawla al-‘abbāsiyya*).²⁵⁶²

After the establishment of the Abbasids in the city by 659-60/1261, Cairo enjoyed the prestige of being a caliphal capital for the first time since the fall of the Fatimids in 566/1171. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many Sunni Muslims viewed Cairo as the seat of legitimate authority.²⁵⁶³ The chief city of the Mamluks prided itself on protecting the last

Politics, and the City in Mamluk Cairo: The Bayna l-Qaṣrayn as a Dynamic ‘Lieu de Mémoire’,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alexander Beihammer and Stavroula Constantinou (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 243-9.

²⁵⁵⁷ Robert Irwin, “Mamluk Literature,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (2003): 9; Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 108-19.

²⁵⁵⁸ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The *Maḥmal* Legend and the Pilgrimage of the Ladies of the Mamluk Court,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 1 (1997): 90; idem, “Qāyṭbāy’s Foundation in Medina, the *Madrasah*, the *Ribāt*, and the *Dashīshah*,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 61; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 15 (see also footnotes).

²⁵⁵⁹ Mona F. Hassan, “Loss of Caliphate: The Trauma and Aftermath of 1258 and 1924” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2009), 150.

²⁵⁶⁰ Carl F. Petry, “Robing Ceremonials in Late Mamluk Egypt: Hallowed Traditions, Shifting Protocols,” in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York, 2001), 353.

²⁵⁶¹ See Chapter 4 above on Ibn Taghrībirdī and al-‘Aynī. On the importance of the Seljuqs and Ayyubids to Mamluk legitimacy, see: P. M. Holt, “The Position and Power of the Mamlūk Sultan,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 2 (1975): 244-5; idem, “The Virtuous Ruler in Thirteenth-Century Mamluk Royal Biographies,” in *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1980): 34; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reign of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 94-5; idem, *Kingship and Ideology*, 12.

²⁵⁶² Paul Balog, *Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1964), 120-4.

²⁵⁶³ Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 32; idem, “Late Mamlūk Military Institution and Innovation,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 464.

bulwark of Islamic society and tradition and serving as a shelter for Sunni *‘ulamā’*.²⁵⁶⁴ The reinvention of Cairo as preeminent seat of caliphal authority may have had bearing on other decisions taken by the Mamluk sultans, such as Qalāwūn’s move to found a hospital worthy of comparison with Baghdad’s ‘Aḏūdī hospital or Nūr al-Dīn Zengī’s hospital in Damascus.²⁵⁶⁵ That Cairo was home to an Abbasid caliph bestowed it with preeminence in diplomatic protocol, and made it a cultural center raising it above the status of other Muslim seats of power.²⁵⁶⁶ Emissaries from other rulers as far away as India often traveled lengthy distances to petition the citadel for requests of caliphal recognition, support, safe conduct, or permission to conduct trade.²⁵⁶⁷ The idea that Mamluk Cairo was indeed a caliphal capital that enjoyed pride of place in Islamdom is cemented by the observation of modern historians that once the Ottomans dispatched the last Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil III to Istanbul in 923/1517, Egypt ceased to be the center of empire, and was relegated once again to provincial status.²⁵⁶⁸

Demonstrating continuity with the Islamic heritage proved imperative in times of uncertainty when Mamluk bureaucrats and theologians, as members of the population at large, felt embattled by forces of unbelief, particularly the Mongols and Crusaders. To orthodox Sunni scholars operating under the aegis of the Mamluks, Abbasid caliphs, albeit powerless ones, were an important representation of religious leadership that allowed prophetic traditions to retain their meaning such as the opportunity to recognize an *imām* of the age to whom all Muslims owed obedience.²⁵⁶⁹

²⁵⁶⁴ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-muḥāḍara fī ta’rīkh Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1967-8), 2:94. The importance of the Abbasid caliphate to Egypt was hardly the caliphs themselves, but rather the caliphate’s *presence* in Egypt. Scholars and chancery secretaries such as al-‘Umarī, al-Qalqashandī, Abū Ḥāmid al-Qudṣī, Khunjī, and al-Suyūṭī insisted that Mamluk Cairo was an ideal city, the heartland of Islam, unspoiled by depredations in which scholars were free to perfect themselves and teach disciples. See also: C. H. Becker, “Barthold’s Studien über Kalif und Sultan,” in *Der Islam* 4 (1916): 372; Ibrāhīm ‘Alī Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr fī ‘aṣr dawlat al-mamālīk al-jarākisa* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1960), 52; Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Aẓīm Khulī, *al-‘Ulamā’ fī Miṣr fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M.* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 2014), 67, 69-71.

²⁵⁶⁵ Linda S. Northrup, “Qalāwūn’s Patronage of the Medical Sciences in Thirteenth-Century Egypt,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 125. See also: Iman R. Abdulfattah, “Relics of the Prophet and Practices of His Veneration in Medieval Cairo,” *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1, no. 1 (2014): 84.

²⁵⁶⁶ Elizabeth M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 117; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Diplomatic Conventions in the Mamluk Sultanate,” *Annales islamologiques* 41 (2007): 106.

²⁵⁶⁷ See for example: Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa’id ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1956–73), 2:3:645. See also: Petry, *Protectors*, 32; idem, “Late Mamlūk Military Institution and Innovation,” 463-4.

²⁵⁶⁸ Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1798* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 10.

²⁵⁶⁹ This is in reference to the well-known prophetic saying attributed to Muḥammad, “He who dies without knowing the *imām* of his time, dies the death of [the days of] ignorance (*jāhiliyya*).”

The regime founded by the Mamluks in Cairo was keen to follow the traditions and legacy left behind by their recent predecessors. Modeling themselves on the Seljuqs and Ayyubids, the Mamluks also endowed Sunni and Sufi institutions.²⁵⁷⁰ The early Baḥrī Mamluks may also have sought architecturally to connect the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo with the controversial legacy of the “slave queen” Shajar al-Durr (d. 648/1250).²⁵⁷¹

The Islamic cultural and social order counted for a great deal among the ‘*ulamā*’ and by necessity, the Mamluk ruling class. It was thus that the major forces supporting the viability of Abbasid authority were little more than the cultural forces of history and tradition that enabled its survival from its installation by Baybars until the early months of Ottoman conquest two and a half centuries later.

1. History and Tradition in the Mamluk Court

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have discussed and illustrated the residual potency of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk society. Notions of history and tradition, quaint though powerful, jointly ensured that the Abbasid caliphate continued to maintain a unique brand of sacred authority throughout its existence in Cairo.

It is no surprise that a classical Islamic institution such as the caliphate enjoyed considerable relevance, harbored in a regime built on coups and assassinations. While it may not seem immediately apparent, the caliphate carried significance among the professional classes of the state as well as a degree of resonance among the people, largely based on precedent. Mamluk sources often depict the caliphs cloistered away in the citadel as permanent fixtures in the

²⁵⁷⁰ Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 365-9; P. M. Holt, “The Structure of Government in the Mamluk Sultanate,” in *Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P.M. Holt (Westminster: Aris and Philips, 1977), 46; Linda S. Northrup, “The Baḥrī Mamlūk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 268; Amalia Levanoni, “The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria: The Turkish Mamlūk Sultanate (648-784/1250-1382) and the Circassian Mamlūk Sultanate (784-923/1382/1517),” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2, *The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 240.

²⁵⁷¹ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a’yān al-mī’a al-thāmina* (Hyderabad, 1972), 2:281. Doris Behrens-Abouseif attached significance to the fact that the Mamluks converted a former palace of Shajar al-Durr into a residence used by the Abbasid caliphs. See: “Citadel of Cairo,” 53; idem, “*Maḥmal* Legend,” 91-2, 96; idem, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 9. For a conflation of caliphate and sultanate made via the legacy of Shajar al-Durr (the result of a misreading of history by compilers of the *Sīrat Baybars* literature), see: Thomas Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire: Entstehung, Überlieferung und Bedeutung der Sīrat Baibars in ihrem sozio-politischen Kontext* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 332-3; idem, “Legitimität durch Erzählung: Ayyubidsche und kalifale Legitimation mamlukischer Herrschaft in der populären *Sīrat Baibars*,” in *Die Mamlūken: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur: Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann, 1942-1999*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Anja Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2003), 260; Julien Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks: XIIIe - XVIe siècle; une expérience du pouvoir dans l’Islam médiéval* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014), 113-4.

background. On many occasions, however, the caliphs were drawn into politics and ceremonial demanded that they be allowed to play a modest ongoing role in social and political life.

That widespread acceptance for the sanctity of a seemingly hollow office actually existed is confirmed by a variety of socio-cultural behaviors which demonstrate the Muslim community's acknowledgment of the authority of the Abbasid caliphate. Regular public ceremonial, periodic sessions and meetings with the '*ulamā*' and other classes of society reinforced a public persona for the caliphate. That the Mamluks allowed and encouraged the evolution of Abbasid traditions during its 250 year residence in Cairo suggests that not only was the position of the Abbasid caliph more integrated into Cairene life than scholars have previously imagined, but also demonstrates acknowledgment of the caliph's position (demoted as it may have been *vis-à-vis* the classical model).²⁵⁷² Tacit recognition of the contemporary caliphate in works of jurisprudence, and more pronounced acknowledgment in historical literature and deeds of investiture, all serve to underscore an important manifestation of the place of the caliphate and the Abbasid dynasty in Mamluk society.²⁵⁷³

A. Abbasid Prestige and the Caliphal Office

The line of Abbasids descended from the progenitor al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh were little more than a family of notables living as stipendiaries of the Mamluk regime. Their very existence at the Mamluk court, however, indicated a chain of apostolic authority connecting back to Muḥammad.²⁵⁷⁴ As the representatives of old Arabo-Islamic nobility, many sectors of society watched the members of the Abbasid family with a great deal of wonderment and expectation. As symbolic vessels of Islamic leadership and guarantors of the *sharī'a*, Abbasid descendants enjoyed tremendous veneration based on the legacy of the early powerful rulers produced by their family. In subsequent centuries, religious scholars and historians remained steeped in prophetic traditions, apocryphal or not, that strengthened Abbasid claims. Speech attributed to the Prophet stated that sovereignty and authority must reside in the line of al-ʿAbbās: "I saw in a vision the children of Marwān (Umayyads) taking possession of my pulpit, one after another, which troubled me, and I saw the children of ʿAbbās (Abbasids) taking possession of my pulpit one after another and that gladdened me," which retained currency in contemporary Mamluk literature and

²⁵⁷² Biographical literature pertaining to the caliphs suggests that the Abbasid role in Cairo went beyond providing political legitimacy for the Mamluk ruling class.

²⁵⁷³ I am grateful to Professor Stephen Humphreys for his comment on my 2011 MESA paper.

²⁵⁷⁴ Jonathan P. Berkey, "Mamluk Religious Policy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 7. Some Mamluk historians like Baybars al-Manṣūrī and the authors of Mamluk investiture deeds understood the contemporary caliphs as conduits providing a link to the family of the Prophet.

discourse on the caliphate.²⁵⁷⁵ Thus spurious traditions which strengthened classical Abbasid legitimacy maintained relevance in Mamluk times.

The opinion that the caliphate must exclusively pass among the Abbasid family had gained quiet acceptance in the ninth century particularly after Ḥanbalī traditionists expressed their support for the dynasty.²⁵⁷⁶ After the usurpation of caliphal power, as early as the Buyid period (ca. 945-1055 in Baghdad), “Muslims who had lost any desire to obey the ‘Abbāsids nevertheless defended the principle that the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs should, even if deprived of executive power, be maintained as a symbol of legitimate government and of unity among Muslims.”²⁵⁷⁷ By the late eleventh century, al-Ghazālī assumed cooperation between the imamate and the sultanate, and his famous remark proves instructive on the institution of caliphal dispensation:

We consider that the function of the caliphate is contractually assumed by that person of the Abbasid house who is charged with it, and that the function of government in the various lands is carried out by means of sultans, who owe allegiance to the caliphate. Government in these days is a consequence solely of military power, and whosoever he may be to whom the possessor of military power gives his allegiance, that person is the caliph.²⁵⁷⁸

Abbasid family prestige withstood Mongol devastation and endured well beyond the late thirteenth century in greater Cairo. Mamluk historians were the heirs of classical Arabic historiography with its wide array of interests, literary forms, and subjects, including both justification for the caliphate and celebration of the august lineage of its longest-reigning family. Joining with the religious scholars, they picked up and elaborated upon the debates of their

²⁵⁷⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d.), 11-4.

²⁵⁷⁶ Ovamir Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 107. For an exploration and reassessment of this view, see: Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ‘Abbāsids: The Emergence of the Proto Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 8, 70-91, 106-18. See also: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (University of Chicago Press, 1974), 453.

²⁵⁷⁷ Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, 2nd ed. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 18. The dual forces of divine providence and descent from the Prophet had helped to construct the Abbasid claim to the caliphate. See: Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 112.

²⁵⁷⁸ Al-Ghazālī, *al-Iqtīṣād fī al-i’tiqād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1988), 150, also quoted in H. A. R. Gibb, “Some Considerations on the Sunni Theory of the Caliphate,” in *Studies in the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 142-3. See also: Lambton, *State and Government*, 112; Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule: Government and Islam – Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 237-46.

predecessors as well as the rich tradition of Abbasid hagiography carried forward into their own time.²⁵⁷⁹

Thanks in part to widespread religious endowments for *madrasas* and Sufi *khānqās*, which helped create an “educated Sunni elite with shared values,”²⁵⁸⁰ scholars maintained and upheld reverence for both the caliphate and the Abbasid family within a theologian-dominated expression of Islam that enjoyed the state’s blessing and protection. In exchange for supporting scholarly institutions and cultivating an infrastructure, Mamluk rulers secured acceptance of their rule from the ‘*ulamā*’.²⁵⁸¹ While tradition dictated that the caliphate must retain authority, its nature remained, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous and undefined.

Although the Abbasids of Cairo were a far cry from the Rāshidūn caliphs in terms of power, they represented an important symbolic link to them. Few religious scholars believed that the contemporary caliph should lead in the temporal sphere; most expressed their great satisfaction, or at least their resignation, to the Mamluk status quo that formally delegated caliphal duties to the sultan. The imamate, as it had been understood in classical times, had been theoretically reconfigured as a sultanate and caliphate working as separate parts of a single mechanism, a schema tolerable to many scholars including Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, Ibn Jamā’a, and Ibn Taymiyya, so long as Islamic obligations were serviced by the arrangement.

The legacy of the Abbasid family and its eponymous ancestor reverberated in the social fabric of the Mamluk period. Expressing love and empathy for the descendants of the Prophet’s uncle presented scholars with opportunities to align themselves with the norms of Sunni political theory (including the affirmation that the majority of the *umma* had not been led astray by accepting Abbasid — as opposed to Alid or other -- leadership) as well as providing a means to demonstrate orthodox credentials in conformity with the worldview and official historical narrative of classical Sunni Islam.²⁵⁸²

Beyond traditional reverence for the family of al-‘Abbās, the realities of the caliphal office escaped few historians. The position of the caliphs of Cairo resembled that of the later Abbasids of Baghdad under the Turkish amirs, Buyids, and Seljuq rulers who seized power in succession. The primarily ceremonial role of bestowing authority on an incoming temporal ruler

²⁵⁷⁹ C. E. Bosworth, *Al-Maqrīzī’s “Book of Contention and Strife Concerning the Relations between the Banū Umayyāh and the Banū Hāshim”* (Manchester, 1980), 9-12; Paul M. Cobb, “Al-Maqrīzī, Hashimism, and the Early Caliphates,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 69-71.

²⁵⁸⁰ Northrup, “The Bahrī Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” 270.

²⁵⁸¹ Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 7.

²⁵⁸² Use of the caliphate in rituals of power such as investiture ceremonial, as well as religious rituals including Friday prayers, religious festivals, and special prayer ceremonies made use of a “symbolic communication” and appealed to wider meanings understood by the participants. See: Van Steenberg, “Ritual, Politics, and the City in Mamluk Cairo,” 241-2.

was nearly identical, although no Mamluk historian admitted this explicitly, beyond pointing out that in his particular time, the caliphate had no independent temporal power.

Nevertheless, the presence of the Abbasid family in Cairo remained a valuable and recognizable link to the glorious past. Later historians such as Ibn Khaldūn, al-Maqrīzī, and al-‘Aynī, while fully recognizing the continuity between the Baghdad and Cairo lines of the family, simultaneously reinforced notions of a practical disconnect between the political landscape of the previous Abbasid capital and that which had emerged in the new one.

2. An Office in Transit: Recasting the Caliph as Scholar

As it traversed various vicissitudes, the caliphal office undertook a peculiar journey in Islamic history. The four Rāshidūn caliphs had taken it upon themselves to rule on religious matters as well as make military and political decisions. The growing influence of the scholarly class eroded religious authority from the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs, who were deemed largely temporal leaders by the *umma*. The Abbasid rulers of the ninth century who championed the doctrines of the Mu‘tazila movement were ultimately deprived of their authority to interpret the sources of religious law and witnessed this power accrued to the ‘*ulamā*’. For a time the caliphs retained political control, until that too was lost amidst the rise of autonomous regional rulers in the former provinces of the caliphate and the usurpation of power in the Abbasid capital by dominant amirs and later sultans from the late ninth to the early thirteenth centuries. The caliph was kept at court largely to legitimize the latest military strongman to come to power. In those years, the caliphs were regarded as bearers of some religious significance which lasted throughout the span of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk Cairo.²⁵⁸³

Holt characterized “the Mamluk sultanate [as] a complex political and social organization.”²⁵⁸⁴ Although many public appointments were subject to the whim of the Mamluk ruling class, the caliphate, with its close association to the sultanate, was especially sensitive to demanding political currents. Like any polymorphous public office, the Cairo caliphate, after its establishment, lent itself readily to innovation, as caliphal practice or policy was often invented on the fly to correspond to the needs of the regime.²⁵⁸⁵ The first caliphs had been used to address

²⁵⁸³ For the political history, position, and status of the Abbasid caliphs in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, see: Eric Hanne, *Putting the Caliph in his Place: Power, Authority, and the Late Abbasid Caliphate* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson Press, 2007). For a discussion of residual caliphal duties in that period, see: Amir Hasan Siddiqi, “Insignia of Sovereignty during the Caliphate,” in *Proceedings of the Pakistan History Conference 3* (1953): 67-75.

²⁵⁸⁴ Holt, “Structure of Government,” 59.

²⁵⁸⁵ Although some scholars characterize the Later Middle Period as a period of continuity, political life was hardly stagnant. For its part, Mamluk power proved durable and the sultanate underwent frequent

the pressing legitimating requirements of Baybars, and then as a symbol of authority in his anti-Ilkhanid alliance-building endeavors with the Golden Horde.²⁵⁸⁶ From Cairo, the caliphate played an important part as a standard of *jihād* against the Mongols in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.²⁵⁸⁷ The caliph was unable to make military or religious appointments, though on occasion he was permitted to intercede on behalf of a disgraced amir or other party seeking his assistance.²⁵⁸⁸ The influence of the Abbasid caliphs (as well as other officials) was also sought after by ambitious civilian notables who wished to wield it on their career paths. According to Michael Chamberlain, “civilians enlisted sultans, caliphs, wazīrs, and amīrs to depose holders of manṣabs in favor of others, or to defend a client’s hold on one, in a variety of ways. Payoffs and gifts were a common means of acquiring a manṣab.”²⁵⁸⁹ By the mid-fourteenth century, the caliphate received a more public role through its association with communal rituals at the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa, as well as prayers for rain and prayers against the plague. Politically, in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, on at least half a dozen occasions, rebellions against the sitting sultan, whether sincere or not, appeared to consider the caliph as a suitable replacement ruler. The later fifteenth century, save for one interruption, was a period of political quietude for the caliphate, when it engaged itself fully with the scholarly class. The early sixteenth century brought with it the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk sultanate, in

change due to an array of historical factors which drove a near constant evolution of offices, institutions, and households. See: Holt, “Position and Power,” 249.

²⁵⁸⁶ P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London: Longman, 1986), 93-4; idem, “Some Observations on the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate of Cairo,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 503; Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, tr. P. M. Holt (London: Longman, 1992), 256-62; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Īlkhānīd War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 82-4; Stefan Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat (A.D. 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Baghdad über Aleppo zu den Restaurationen in Cairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 174-5, Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 52-3; Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 36-7.

²⁵⁸⁷ The caliphs were also brought on campaigns throughout the Mamluk period to boost troop morale and challenge the religious authority of Muslim enemies. For examples see the collection of Mamluk sources describing the Battle of Shaqḥab assembled by ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī in his edition of: ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī ghazwat al-Malik al-Nāṣir* (Sidon: al-Maktaba al-‘Aṣriyya, 2005), 63, 71, 74, 82, 101, 113, 134, 166, 184; Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 15:349; Muḥammad ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīkh ibn al-Furāt* (Beirut, 1936), 9:167; al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 327; Muḥammad ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i’ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1982-4), 5:68-9. See also: Faruk Sümer, “Yavuz Selim s’est-il proclamé calife?” *Turcica* 21-23 (1991): 347.

²⁵⁸⁸ Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 12. For examples of the Abbasid caliphs interceding with Mamluk authorities on behalf of amirs, religious officials, courtiers, and common people, see: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:3:1165; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 15:441; ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1970), 1:267-8, 4:154; Ibrāhīm al-Biqā’ī, *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd al-‘Awfī (Giza, 1992-3), 3:330-1; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:157-8.

²⁵⁸⁹ Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 96-7.

which the Abbasid caliph played an interesting final role as interlocutor during the period of transition.

A logical outcome for these later Abbasid caliphs, stripped as they were of nearly all traditional powers, was the Mamluk establishment's presentation of the caliphs as esteemed members of the learned class.²⁵⁹⁰ The Mamluks took active steps to cultivate what might be termed the “‘*ālim*-caliph,” a Commander of the Faithful trained in Islamic sciences and capable of performing *ijtihād*.²⁵⁹¹ This may have been done in part to reconcile the toothless caliphate with at least *one* of the classical stipulations for the imamate -- the notion that the caliph or *imām* must be able to provide legal ruling on the matters of his subjects.²⁵⁹² This was also a stipulation that could easily be set aside by the military and religious classes if the caliph held unpopular views.²⁵⁹³

It is worth mentioning, however, that given the past position of the caliph as chief military and spiritual leader, the idea that the caliph had to sit with regime-appointed tutors and be “taught” Islamic science at all, may have been a slight to the traditional social position of the caliphal office.²⁵⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the Mamluks encouraged many of the caliphs under their tutelage to pursue religious endeavors that would distance them from politics and provide an excuse to cloister them away, submerged in directed study. Although the expectations of the Mamluk establishment provided some pressure -- piety, family tradition, or a lack of other meaningful pursuits -- may have driven some of the caliphs into modest careers of study.²⁵⁹⁵

²⁵⁹⁰ Here we may recall Khalīl al-Zāhirī's late fifteenth century demand that the caliph must necessarily “busy himself with the pursuit of religious knowledge and have books to study in his library.” See: *Kitāb zubdat kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-al-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Cairo: Dār al-‘Arab, 1988), 90. See also: Holt, *Age of the Crusades*, 150; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial,” *Annales islamologiques* 24 (1988): 32.

²⁵⁹¹ Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 196. For an image of the eighth and ninth century Abbasid caliphs as scholars in their own right, see: Zaman, *Religion and Politics*, 120-36. Al-Ghazālī likewise required that the weak caliph of the Seljuq period should, at the very least, be a *muṭahhid* capable of providing religious judgments. Arguing that the caliph was still capable of formulating Islamic rulings provided legitimacy after the caliph's authority had been usurped by the Seljuq sultan. See: Crone, *God's Rule*, 240-3.

²⁵⁹² Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya wa-al-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2006), 18; Badr al-Dīn ibn Jamā‘a, *Tahrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām*, ed. Hans Kofler, “Handbuch des islamischen Staats- und Verwaltungsrechtes von Badr-ad-Dīn Ibn Ġama‘ah,” *Islamica* 6 (1934): 356.

²⁵⁹³ Sherman Jackson, “From Prophetic Action to Constitutional Theory: A Novel Chapter in Medieval Jurisprudence,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993): 85-6.

²⁵⁹⁴ I thank Professor Thomas Herzog for sharing this observation with me following an invited talk at the University of Toronto on 4 May 2012.

²⁵⁹⁵ Reflections of the Mamluk regime's interest in reinventing the caliphs as scholars appear in the biographies of individual Abbasids. However, it is worth mentioning that compilers of biographical dictionaries were often predisposed towards highlighting a subject's training, teachers, and scholastic abilities. Nevertheless, the Abbasid caliphs of Cairo, but for a few later exceptions (i.e. al-Mustakfi II, al-

Given what we know regarding the Abbasids and the degree to which they studied, we can only suggest that the caliphs numbered among the “minor scholars” identified by Berkey who lacked the extensive training of the ‘*ulamā*’, although they had acquired enough religious knowledge to join the ranks of thousands of unprofessional scholars.²⁵⁹⁶

Instruction for Abbasid family members was neither uniform nor mandatory and some proved more adept than others. Al-Mu‘taḍid II (1414-41) and al-Mutawakkil II (1479-97) were scholars in their own right, while others who held the caliphate such as Zakariyyā’ al-Mu‘taṣim (1377) were said to be unlettered (‘*āmī*’).²⁵⁹⁷ Abbasid family members, including Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb (d. 1476), his son Khalīl (d. 1514), and Mūsā al-Hāshimī (d. 1486), underwent Islamic training despite never succeeding to the family office.²⁵⁹⁸ Compared with others, al-Mustakfī II (1441-51) and al-Mustamsik (1497-1508, 1516) were not as heavily trained as some family members even though they enjoyed pious reputations. Some Abbasids, like al-Wāthiq II (1383-6) even received training in non-traditional arts such as geomancy,²⁵⁹⁹ while more aesthetically-inclined caliphs such as al-Mustakfī I (1302-40) and al-Mutawakkil III (1508-17) counted music, calligraphy, and verse among their passions perhaps at the expense of religious study.²⁶⁰⁰

The Mamluks may have sought to reconfigure the caliphal office as an entirely religious and apolitical entity, while the various attempts at bringing the Abbasids *into* politics are perhaps best understood as acts of sheer desperation by certain amirs. But if Mamluk authorities wanted

Mutawakkil II, al-Mustamsik, and al-Mutawakkil III), appear to have been consistently trained. At his residence in the tower of the citadel, Baybars provided the caliph al-Ḥākim with tutors to strengthen his religious knowledge. Al-Dhahabī claims that Baybars sent off to Syria to find the best instructors in ‘*ilm*, ‘*khaff*, and ‘*adab*’ for the caliph. See: al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a’lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut, 2004), 53:16. Mamluk sources also imply that his successor al-Mustakfī was a skilled calligrapher and spent time on religious education. Al-Ḥākim II had many famous ḥadīth teachers and was qualified to narrate ḥadīth himself. Al-Mu‘taḍid II and al-Mustakfī II were both known for engaging in scholarly salons and lecturing students. Al-Mustanjid was well-versed in the Qur’ān. See: Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-lāmi’ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi’* (Cairo, 1934-6), 10:329; idem, *al-Dhayl al-tāmm ‘alā duwal al-Islām li-al-Dhahabī*, ed. Hasan Ismā‘īl Marwa (Beirut, 1992), 2:326. Many caliphs were patrons of the arts and were able to fraternize with scholars and litterateurs. See: Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfī ba’da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn and Sa‘īd ‘Āshūr (Cairo, 1984-93), 4:304-5; Holt, “Some Observations,” 503; Yūsuf Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafīsa, Sa l’égende, son culte et son cimetière,” *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 27-55.

²⁵⁹⁶ Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 196-8, 204.

²⁵⁹⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:233; According to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, it was al-Musta‘ṣim who could not pronounce the letters, see: *Ta’rīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. ‘Adnān Darwīsh (Damascus, 1994), 4:46.

²⁵⁹⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *Daw’*, 3:205, 10:86; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Taḥadduth bi-ni‘mat Allāh*, vol. 2 of Elizabeth Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1975), 68.

²⁵⁹⁹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:201.

²⁶⁰⁰ Al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh al-Islām*, 53:376; Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998), 2:420-21; Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī, Quṭb al-Dīn, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka* (Beirut, 1964), 3:185.

the Abbasid caliph to be nothing more than a compliant figurehead, why were they also willing to maintain the conceit that he was a reasonable candidate to hold power over affairs? The answer may be that the caliph was understood as a universal leader who, like the Prophet, possessed both a (potentially) political-military side and a religious one. The selection of such an *‘ālim*-caliph to serve as a compromise candidate or harmless interim sultan while the amirs decided upon the real ruler, also implied an assumption, possibly convenient, that the Commander of the Faithful was simply too sacred and learned to engage in the impious world of secular rule. As a public figure, his time was better spent in study or in supplication for God’s help in advancing the aims of the state; thus, no one should be surprised when he was inevitably “invited” off the throne and restored to his (figurative and literal) tower. It was also expedient that by promoting the caliph as religious scholar *par excellence*, the Mamluks were able to strengthen their image as the chosen rulers favored by the *‘ulamā’*.

3. Weak Caliph, Strong Caliphate

Two important observations can be made regarding the perception of the caliphal office during the Mamluk period. The first is that the office itself, at any given time in Mamluk history, was far more important than the single man who held it. This could likewise be said of the sultanate, the qadiships, and indeed, most public offices of the period. The historical record of the relations between Mamluk sultans and Abbasid caliphs makes it painfully difficult to argue that the sultans respected individual caliphs. The *office* of the caliphate on the other hand, was far more important and could be manipulated or reassigned to a more suitable candidate.²⁶⁰¹ The office was likewise an important universal status quo symbol for the regime. There was a clear and necessary distinction between the holder of an office, and the apparatus of power established around him, in the same way that an imposing mosque might be built around the tomb of a ruler or saint, outwardly projecting the power and authority thought to be embodied by the structure. There is a strong understanding of disconnect between the virtue of the office and what it represents as opposed to the man who holds it who, while honored by the office during his tenure, is ultimately dispensable.²⁶⁰²

The second observation is that many authors of the period inferred a broader and far more civilizational meaning for the caliphal office. For them, the “Caliphate” comprised a multifaceted organization of government functions and ideas. Earlier authors such as al-Māwardī and Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī conceived of a far more complex and far-reaching image of an imamate that managed an

²⁶⁰¹ Berkey has also written on this idea: “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 12.

²⁶⁰² This is not always the case, however, as the popularity of al-Mutawakkil I has demonstrated.

apparatus including the wazirate, the judiciary, leadership in prayer, organization of warfare, tax collection, alms distribution, public order (*ḥisba*), redress of grievance courts (*maẓālim*), various delegated functionaries among the men of the sword, men of the pen, and men of the turban, the networks of advice and intelligence available to the ruler, as well as the merchants and farmers, all of whom played a part.²⁶⁰³ The various *dīwāns* at the ruler's disposal were also an aspect of his imamate/caliphate, and the chancery likewise contributed to the wider notion of caliphate. This inclusive vision was maintained in the Mamluk period by later compilers and historians such as al-Nuwayrī, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Khaldūn who had accepted the reduced status of the Abbasid caliphate as a matter of fact in fourteenth century Cairo.

William Brinner described the caliphate and sultanate, at least during much of the Qalawunid period (741-84/1341-82), as being ceremonial offices outside of the Mamluk system. Indeed, there was no single office which, alone, represented “generally recognized supreme authority.”²⁶⁰⁴ The idea that the caliphate was more than the sum of its parts appeared in various manifestations within Mamluk literature. Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir depicted the sultan and caliph as two parts of a single eye.²⁶⁰⁵ The letter from al-Mustakfī to Yemen informed the Rasulids that the caliph and sultan were both charged with defending the caliphate.²⁶⁰⁶ The caliphal succession deed for al-Musta‘īn describes the caliphate as a sentient being which selects the best office holders to ensure the most efficient form of government.²⁶⁰⁷

Many of the Mamluk chroniclers, who served as members of the religious establishment, seemed satisfied that delegation from the Abbasid caliph supplied the indispensable preconditions that allowed the work of the caliphate to go forth: providing a fulcrum for the work of Sunni Islam, protecting the lives, properties, and affairs of the Muslim community, and enforcing God's laws. This represents an evolutionary step in Muslim statecraft, namely, that the work of the

²⁶⁰³ Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya*, 25-33, 43-67, 83-119, 299-322; Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, tr. G. M. Wickens (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 226-42. For these groups in the Mamluk period, see: Maurice Gaudet-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks d'après les auteurs arabes: description géographique, économique et administrative précédée d'une introduction sur l'organisation gouvernementale* (Paris, 1923), lv-lxxxviii; Holt, “Structure of Government,” 51-9.

²⁶⁰⁴ William Brinner, “The Struggle for Power in the Mamluk State: Some Reflections on the Transition from Bahri to Burji Rule,” *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 4-10 January 1964* (New Delhi, 1970), 233.

²⁶⁰⁵ Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Alṭāf al-khaṭiyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sulṭāniyya al-malakiyya al-ashrafiyya*, ed. Axel Moberg, as *Ur Abd Allah b. Abd eẓ-Zāhir's Biogrāfi över Sultanen el-Melik al-Aṣraf Ḥalīl. Arabisk Tāxt med Översättning, Inledning Ock Anmärkningar Utjiven*, (Lund, 1902), 18.

²⁶⁰⁶ Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fī shīnā‘at al-inshā‘* (Cairo, 1963), 6:423.

²⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. 9:373; idem, *Ma‘āthir al-ināfa fī ma‘ālim al-khilāfa*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Kuwait, 1964), 3:346.

caliphate was far too big for one man to handle alone -- a collective and practical insight by no means unique to the Mamluk period.²⁶⁰⁸

Although they were seen as parts of a whole, Mamluk society and court culture demanded that there were certain boundaries which the sultan and caliph should not over-step. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's meddling with the caliphal succession that had been ratified by the 'ulamā' of Upper Egypt caused discontent in 740/1340 as it was widely held that the sultan had negatively interfered with a unique caliphal prerogative.²⁶⁰⁹ In later years, al-Mutwakkil's unwillingness to name a non-Qalawunid to the sultanate resulted in his unilateral deposition by the amir Aynabak al-Badrī in 779/1377. Again, this indicates a line which the caliph should not cross (i.e., breaking with the existing Mamluk norm mandating that leaders be selected exclusively from the house of Qalāwūn). For his part, disgruntled amirs ultimately ousted Aynabak for *his* interference with the caliphate. When al-Musta'īn was named to the sultanate in 815/1412, Shaykh feared that the caliph would forget his place and develop a taste for the customary perks associated with the sultanate, which again, suggests that in their cohabitation, caliph and sultan were expected to play agreed upon roles, and that failing to do so would lead to trouble for either party. These lines, while never formally defined, were largely subject to expediency as well as the tastes and expectations of Mamluk society accepted by the rank and file.

In the case of the caliph al-Qā'im, who sought after more power for his office after a failed coup against the sultan Īnāl in 859/1455, another governing expectation of the caliphate emerges, in that the 'ulamā' rebuked the caliph as haughty and greedy, violating the understanding that the Commander of the Faithful should not be interested in worldly desires or his material enhancement. Although he was expected to spend on maintaining his family and modest household, the caliph was not to step beyond the expectations that he remain pious and detached, satisfying the social demand made upon an office-holder for the caliphate.

4. Social Discourse and "Cultural Matrix"

Poetry about the Cairo Abbasids, whether congratulatory or consolatory, as well as investiture and succession deeds are among the ways that Mamluk society communicated ideas

²⁶⁰⁸ From the time of the Arab-Islamic conquests, the territory of Islamdom had grown too large for a single caliph to manage all the tasks of governance and religious administration. The caliph extended his authority by means of delegation to qadis for the judicial role, wazirs for the fiscal role, and amirs (and later sultans) for the military role.

²⁶⁰⁹ Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī, *Ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥ wa-awlādiḥ*, ed. Barbara Schäfer (Wiesbaden: 1977), 1:126-7; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta'rīkh*, 2:135-6; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:69, idem, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, 392.

within itself about the caliphate. Such communication, based on the shared sources (in this case history and tradition) of the Islamic experience,²⁶¹⁰ was particularly important at times when the caliphs were isolated from the public. As Chapter 5 has demonstrated above, the investiture documents incorporated all of the elites, including scholars, bureaucrats, and military men, illustrating the way their power relationships were integrated into a whole.²⁶¹¹ Poets and bureaucrats had the means to address a collective “social spirit” or zeitgeist in which the caliphate carried divine and supernatural significance for Sunni Islam.

This communication was not so much an exchange of new ideas, but rather the endeavor to project ideas about the caliph’s significance to society, tapping into either a collective dread or elation towards the caliphal milestone at hand. Thus the poetry and documents, as methods of communication with elements of social performance, transcend notions of mere propaganda; they reinforced and communicated existing notions of communal identity among the Mamluk military and religious elite.²⁶¹²

The somewhat experimental concept or perspective of a “Mamluk cultural matrix” introduced by Jonathan Berkey,²⁶¹³ and further refined by Jo Van Steenbergen,²⁶¹⁴ broadens the horizons for the study of an Abbasid caliphate that played a largely symbolic role among a number of Mamluk social groups.²⁶¹⁵ The second half of this final chapter includes a discussion of the caliphate as a symbol used by the ruling elite and the ‘*ulamā*’ to demonstrate their assimilation and conformity to the norms of a classical Islamic society and state structure. In this context, we might understand the Abbasid caliphate as one of the many available modes or tools of such a cultural matrix. Unifying factor, shared view.*

²⁶¹⁰ John O. Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Islamic Studies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (SAGE: Los Angeles, 2010), 8.

²⁶¹¹ For remarks on the interrelationship of various sectors of Cairene society, see: Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 313-20; Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 386-7; Jo Van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: Interpreting a 14th-Century Panegyric,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 5.

²⁶¹² Van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid Discourse,” 1-2. The means of communication taking place in documents and poetry tapped into the ongoing social expectation that relied on an incumbent Abbasid caliph in the Mamluk capital.

²⁶¹³ Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 386-411.

²⁶¹⁴ Van Steenbergen describes the nature of research involving the Mamluk cultural matrix as “defined by the heuristic concept of a cultural matrix, referring not just to the common cultural involvement of all Mamluk social groups, but also to their operating within a multimodal framework of social semiotic modes of expression that shaped the public representations of their social integration; that is, the ‘performance’ of Mamluk politics and society always being couched in ‘culture’ makes that understandings of Mamluk architecture, art, literature ... should also focus on its wider social semiotic rather than on its mere professional, technical, intellectual or aesthetic values.” (<http://www.mamluk.ugent.be/MCM>)

²⁶¹⁵ Jo Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī, the Qalāwūnid Sultanate, and the Cultural Matrix of Mamluk Society: A Reassessment of Mamlūk Politics in the 1360s,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131, no. 3 (2011): 429.

If we can speak about a collective image of the Abbasid caliphate as a social institution of the Mamluk period which emerges from chronicles, biographical dictionaries, and deeds of investiture, fashioned from the (sometimes conflicting) views of religious scholars and bureaucrats, we find a multilayered concept, which, like the office itself, went beyond any one descendant of al-‘Abbās. Although the individual events associated with the caliphate unfolded on a micro stage of Mamluk history, the wider history, tradition, and ceremonial legacy symbolized by the Abbasid caliph and his office, played out within the framework of the so-called Mamluk cultural matrix: a patchwork of cultural modes of expression that offered the Mamluk elite and presumably their religious establishment, the opportunity to define and represent their respective interests.²⁶¹⁶ The Abbasid caliphate was very much a cultural form, which, through Mamluk manipulation, allowed the elite to represent itself as well as its subordinate social groups.²⁶¹⁷

While the cultural matrix was hardly static and must have transformed with the influx of each new symbol or expression at a given moment in Mamluk history, the Abbasid caliphate persisted as a symbol of importance. To really explore the Abbasid caliphate through the lens of the cultural matrix, we must address its engagement in Mamluk society and what that included. What, if any, were its substantial contributions to Mamluk politics, culture, and religion? Our ability to understand the Cairo caliphate and its capacity to navigate the “norms, values, and codes of behavior” associated with the Mamluk elite of a given period are essential.²⁶¹⁸

5. The Position and Status of the Abbasid Caliph of Cairo

Specialists on the medieval Middle East have long discussed the meaning of the caliphate after the institution reached its apex in the first three centuries of Islam. Although often following a paradigm of decline, many have concluded that the caliphate gradually lost significance and ultimately disappeared in most of the lands that had recognized Abbasid rule, both in reality and later nominally. Thus it remains to discuss the duties, status, and wider implications of a *resurrected* albeit somewhat minor version of the Abbasid caliphate that, based on existing sources, held symbolic resonance primarily in the society of Greater Cairo and which was largely barred from politics by the Mamluk sultans and their supporters, the true wielders of power.

Yet it was in Mamluk Egypt that the caliphate recovered some of its original life-force as aspiring amirs, anxious for the sultanate, sought Abbasid support, thereby reinvigorating some of

²⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 426; idem, “Qalāwūnid Discourse,” 26-7; idem, “Ritual, Politics, and the City in Mamluk Cairo,” 231.

²⁶¹⁷ Van Steenbergen, “Ritual, Politics, and the City in Mamluk Cairo,” 231.

²⁶¹⁸ Van Steenbergen, “The Amir Yalbughā al-Khāṣṣakī,” 441.

the influence and prestige lost by the caliphate in the years prior to the fall of Baghdad.²⁶¹⁹ Indeed, Mamluk scholars and their modern counterparts have argued that the caliphate absorbed authority by virtue of its proximity to a powerful sultan.²⁶²⁰

There was considerable pressure on the Cairo caliphs to remain confined physically and symbolically and to be malleable to the Mamluk program. The pressure appeared to be ongoing in both the Turkish Baḥrī and Circassian Burjī periods and may have forced individual office-holders into awkward political situations, particularly in the contentious milieu of later Burjī Mamluk politics. Nevertheless, the deeply ingrained traditions of popular respect for the caliphate as an office frequently shielded individual caliphs.²⁶²¹

None of the Mamluk chroniclers unequivocally disputed the doctrine that the caliphate was obligatory in nature. The narrative sources kept alive the idea that contemporary Cairene culture demanded that the reigning caliph be a member of the Abbasid family installed by Baybars.²⁶²² Despite this, the intelligentsia disagreed over some characteristics of the caliphate. For some, including the Mamluks and the majority of the working scholarly class attached to their regime, it mattered little that the caliph lacked power to “command, forbid, and be obeyed” so long as the work of the “Caliphate” (as it embraced the caliph, sultan, military, religious, and bureaucratic institutions) occurred through labor delegated to the sultan by the caliph then dispersed along the Mamluk chain of command.²⁶²³ Another position, held by some who might be considered independents or newly arrived outsiders, such as Ibn Khaldūn or al-Maqrīzī, was that unless the caliph was a participant in actual power, the institution as it stood in Cairo, was not a caliphate in the classical sense, a position no doubt enjoying broader support at times when the regime stumbled or became oppressive.²⁶²⁴

²⁶¹⁹ Aḥmad Ḥuṭayṭ, *Qaḍāyā min ta'rīkh al-mamālīk al-siyāsī wa-al-ḥaḍārī, 648-923 H/1250-1517 M* (Beirut: al-Furāt, 2003), 143.

²⁶²⁰ Husayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, *Nafā'is al-majālis al-sultāniyya*, published in *Majālis al-Sultān al-Ghawrī: ṣafahāt min ta'rīkh Miṣr fī qarn al-'āshir hijrī*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (Cairo 1941), 111; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l'époque des mamelouks*, xxii-xxiv.

²⁶²¹ Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 53-4. Garcin argued that the legal sanction on offer by the Abbasid caliphs was perhaps considered less necessary during the Burjī period, as the legitimacy of the sultanate had long since been established. See: “The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 303.

²⁶²² Despite some thin reservation from Abū al-Fidā', Mamluk historians in the centuries following the investitures of Baybars do not appear to have actively denied that the caliphs were true Abbasids. The status of the contemporary caliph was unanimously accepted, regardless of historians' opinions towards the practical limits of the office: even seemingly skeptical writers began their annals by listing the reigning rulers and office-holders, often beginning with the incumbent Abbasid caliph.

²⁶²³ We might include such thinkers and historians as Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Taghrībirdī in this grouping.

²⁶²⁴ This might partially explain Lambton's earlier claim that Ibn Khaldūn stated that the Abbasid of Cairo was not a caliph. See note 1529 above.

A final position among a group of *'ulamā'* such as the scholars who participated in the *Zāhirī fitna* of the 780/1380s, as well as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and al-Suyūṭī, seemed to favor an active (though indeterminate) expansion of caliphal powers and duties to bring about a restoration of the institution along classical lines.²⁶²⁵

In terms of the remaining duties left to the caliph in the later Mamluk period, at the start of each new month when the moon was sighted, the caliph would join the qadis to pay respect to the sultan and on rare occasions, offer his own counsel.²⁶²⁶ This was important on the two Muslim festival days, *'īd al-fitr* and *'īd al-aḍḥā*. The caliphs were also expected to participate in the funerals of important state officials, amirs, *'ulamā'* and even members of the sultans' families.²⁶²⁷

The caliph served to elevate the standing of Cairo by providing the Mamluk chancery the means by which documents could be issued in his name. In some cases, scribes exploited the illusion that the caliph himself had composed the document conferring recognition or disapproval on subjects and petitioners.²⁶²⁸

Apart from having the caliphs appear at investiture ceremonies, the regime emphasized the religious role of the caliphs by making them the centerpiece in public rituals seeking relief from draught and plague as well as denouncing the infidelity of official enemies. In the Burjī period the caliphs also frequently appeared by request at a sultan's deathbed and swore to solemnly oversee the succession of the heir apparent.²⁶²⁹

As many contemporary jurists refrained from explicit statements on the precise situation, we can make only tentative conclusions about the position and status of the Abbasid caliphate in Mamluk society beyond its legitimating role. In theory, one author has argued that the caliphate

²⁶²⁵ In the case of the *Zāhiriyya fitna*, however, the participants were after a new caliphate entirely, not expanded powers for the incumbent Abbasid. See: Lutz Wiederhold, "Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a 'Zāhiri Revolt' in Damascus in 1386," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 214-5.

²⁶²⁶ The caliph was frequently excluded from the advisory portion of the monthly meetings with the sultan beginning in the later fifteenth century. Nevertheless, some succession documents indicate that the caliph was expected to advise the sultan and his circle and at least on one occasion, he is instructed to select advice for the sultan which was known to have worked in the past. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 9:372-3. See also: Annemarie Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi im spätmittelalterlichen Agypten," *Die Welt des Islams* 24 (1942): 74.

²⁶²⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5:27-8, 30-1; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 68, 75; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Une institution mal connue: le khalifat abbaside du Caire," *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 20, no. 77-8 (1972): 17; Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 346-7.

²⁶²⁸ Notable examples include : al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 6 :421-6 ; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:1:65-6; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Shādhilī, *Bahjat al-'ābidīn bi-tarjamat Ḥāfiẓ al-'Aṣr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Damascus, 1998), 172-4. However, Mamluk sources allege that some caliphs were capable and did in fact produce documents. See: al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, 6:318.

²⁶²⁹ On these and other ceremonial functions of the caliphs, see: Mustafa Banister, "Naught Remains to the Caliph but his Title: Revisiting Abbasid Authority in Mamluk Cairo," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014) [in press].

represented the separation of the Mamluk political and religious spheres because the prerequisite for the divinely delegated sultanate was the caliphate itself as symbol of the prevailing *sharīʿ* order.²⁶³⁰ However, the Abbasid caliph did occupy a common ground between the religious establishment and the political administration, despite a muted role in both spheres, he nevertheless gained access and relevance in their respective worlds. Caliphal authority was not limited to the official political or religious spheres of Mamluk society, rather it also had a minor role to play in the realm of popular religious tradition.

It is still true that the caliphs essentially served at the pleasure of the Mamluk sultans. All of them spent the majority of their time in confinement, brought out by the authorities mainly to perform ceremonial duties or to accept public appeals to their authority in special circumstances, such as swearing amirs to fealty, naming a son heir to the sultanate, or to stand witness to the regime's milestones. After the mid-fourteenth century some restrictions relaxed as the caliphs were permitted to tend to their duties at the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa. Under the Mamluks the caliphs were stripped of classical caliphal prerogatives which even the Buyids and Seljuqs had not removed, such as the rights of *sikka* and *khutba*.²⁶³¹ Faruk Sümer described the Abbasid caliphs as *fonctionnaires* of the Mamluk sultans with little choice but to carry out orders at once, lest the caliphs risk losing the position and wealth that accompanied their station.²⁶³²

Concern over the disruption of the caliphate was not limited to the general population. Just as al-Ghazālī had feared in the late eleventh/early twelfth century, some Mamluk jurists evidently worried that in the absence of a caliph, there would be no law and all public appointments, legal rulings, and even marriages would be invalid.²⁶³³

Reinforced over time, the caliph's position, "technically indispensable" at all investiture ceremonies, came to be similar to that of the four chief qadis with whom he frequently appeared

²⁶³⁰ Saïd A. Arjomand, "Legitimacy and Political Organisation: Caliphs, Kings and Regimes," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 4, *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Irwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 251.

²⁶³¹ Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 372-3. As modern Arabic-language scholars have observed, much of the damage to the caliphate had occurred long before Baybars installed al-Mustansir in 1261. The Mamluk sultans did not "rob the caliphs of their rights or cripple their influence;" the Buyid and Saljuq rulers had done it centuries before. Although some Mamluk sultans took punitive measures against the caliphs, they, unlike the Buyids and Saljuqs, never blinded or killed an Abbasid caliph under their protection. See: 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk wa-rusūmuḥum fī Miṣr: dirāsa shāmila lil-nuzum al-siyāsiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjū al-Miṣriyya, 1979), 1:40; Khūlī, *al-'Ulamā' fī Miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, 70.

²⁶³² Sümer, "Yavuz Selim," 346. There was certainly financial gain to be had by office-holders and later sources demonstrate the vigorous competition among Abbasid family members for office.

²⁶³³ Holt, "Structure of Government," 44; Crone, *God's Rule*, 238; Arjomand, "Legitimacy and Political Organisation," 251. This proved to be an abiding concern throughout the sultanate, discussed by courtiers as late as the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. See: al-Ḥusaynī, *Nafā'is*, 100-13.

at functions inside and outside the citadel.²⁶³⁴ Although their public stature often appeared equivalent, the caliph, as one-of-a-kind was raised to a higher level in matters of ceremonial. In reality, however, some members of the religious establishment treated him as an intellectual inferior.²⁶³⁵

In his *Systematic Notes to Ibn Taghrībirdī's Chronicle of Egypt and Syria*, William Popper states that while the Abbasid caliph of Cairo “was usually treated by the court with great respect and generosity, his position was rather social than official, with certain personal influence at times as the nominal head of the religious-legal system.”²⁶³⁶ It is unclear what Popper intended as the caliph’s “social position,” though we may take steps toward a guess. Al-Maqrīzī tells us that the caliphs of his day were socialites, flitting from one dinner in their honor to the next. The caliph was also an important personality who transcended the different classes in Mamluk society, and if restraints were not too severe, he was permitted to pass between them as a universal figure holding relevance in every social stratum. The symbolic presence of the caliphate was also meant to signify that *sharī‘a* was in place, the affairs of the *umma* were in good standing, and that the society was an Islamic one.

²⁶³⁴ Holt, “Some Observations,” 505; idem, “Position and Power,” 243-4.

²⁶³⁵ Each of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence had been placed under the control of four chief qadis which the Mamluks may have sought to link to the idea of the revived caliphate. Modern research has tried to explain the interrelationship of these five key men of religion. Gaudefroy-Demombynes viewed the caliph and the four qadis as a kind of “high religious and juridic community” mirroring the early Islamic tradition of the Prophet and the four Rāshidūn caliphs with the qadis approximating the caliph’s auxiliaries despite their formal appointment by the sultan (*Syrie à l’époque des mamlouks*, xxii). Holt saw the Abbasid caliph as having an official stature *similar* to the qadis, though his legal opinions did not enjoy the same impact (“Some Observations,” 505). Although the caliph’s acceptance of the power transfer to the sultan was a grand public event, it is telling that he was rarely present during the sultan’s proceedings at the *Dār al-‘Adl*, in which the four chief qadis received priority as the chief religious functionaries of the highest rank. See: Holt, “Structure of Government,” 58; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 56. Haarmann described the Abbasid caliph as the silent representative of a fifth neutral *madhhab* (“Yeomanly Arrogance and Righteous Rule: Faḥl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunḡī and the Mamluks of Egypt,” in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, ed. Kambiz Eslami (Princeton, 1998), 121). In practice, the ‘*ulamā*’ of the Mamluk period (whose most visible representatives were the four chief qadis), lent their support to the state by participating in ceremonial along with the caliph and by administering the immense judicial bureaucracy. Indeed, it was not just the caliph who invested the new sultan, it was also the qadis, amirs, and other notables. See: Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politique de Taḡī-d-dīn Aḥmad b. Taymīya* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1939), 48. In its own right, the collective approval of the vast network of ‘*ulamā*’ working in Mamluk territory was the most powerful religious legitimater for the sultans. However, it was the caliph and the four chief qadis and their involvement in the regime’s elaborate ceremonial which symbolized the entire enterprise. Nevertheless, these five men always had to defer to the will of the state and had no recourse to oppose decisions they found objectionable. See: Holt, “Position and Power,” 247; Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 212.

²⁶³⁶ William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans, 1382-1468 A.D.: Systematic Notes*, part 1 (Berkeley, 1955), 83.

The position of the caliphate in Mamluk society appeared satisfactory to most parties. The caliphs themselves, with few exceptions, did not seek a greater role for themselves, and if ever they staggered into political intrigue, the sultans and amirs made them regret it. The religious establishment, save for a few exceptions, likewise tended to withhold support for any increase of caliphal power. Overall, both the religious elite and the Mamluk authorities tended to support existing circumstances.

Despite their muted role, the caliphs retained an almost talismanic power that had its most potent expression in the rituals of court ceremonial and political pageantry throughout the span of the Mamluk period and even into the earliest months of Ottoman Egypt.²⁶³⁷ This ensured that the actual holders of political power, Mamluk or Ottoman, had to approach the caliphate carefully and keep the office holder under guard. Much of the caliph's perceived relevance in Mamluk society resided in his prayers and in the sanctity of his presence at official events. The Abbasid caliphs became such a staple of Mamluk court culture and custom, that their absence at an investiture ceremony was inconceivable. Indeed, the lack of a caliphal appearance, which chroniclers seldom fail to mention in their report of events, could render a sultan's coronation illegitimate.²⁶³⁸

II. Relevance of the Caliphate in Mamluk Society

1. The Caliphate and the Masses

Like most medieval societies, the social arrangement of Mamluk Egypt was deeply hierarchical.²⁶³⁹ The ruling Mamluks stayed in power through the maintenance of a relationship network which linked all important groups of society to the ruling class.²⁶⁴⁰ By promoting their loyalty and protection of the Abbasid caliphate, Mamluk authorities hoped, in large part, to cultivate the support and sympathies of the *ʿamma*, the Sunni Muslim civilian masses of Egypt

²⁶³⁷ There is a rich relationship between protective Islamic religious symbology and magic. See: Edgar W. Francis, "Magic and Divination in the Medieval Islamic Middle East," in *History Compass* 9, no. 8 (2011): 622-33 and bibliography. On forms of magic reintroduced to Islam by popular forms of Sufism in the period, see: Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18.

²⁶³⁸ Mamluk authorities re-staged a second investiture ceremony for al-Manṣūr 'Alī in 778/1377 in the presence of al-Mutawakkil who, waylaid in 'Aqaba, had missed the original. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3:284, 290; Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1963–72), 11:148-9; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī*, 1:2:192.

²⁶³⁹ Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 79-84; Popper, *Systematic Notes*, 1:1-18; Berkey, "Culture and Society," 386-8; idem, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority*, 21.

²⁶⁴⁰ Levanoni, "The Mamlūks in Egypt and Syria," 276. The political elite were involved, symbiotically, with the regime's men of culture. See: Van Steenbergen, "Qalāwūnid Discourse," 28.

and Syria.²⁶⁴¹ Although Mamluk sources sometimes offer clues, the precise relationship between the caliphate and the *‘amma*, is difficult to pinpoint.²⁶⁴²

Certainly the current of popular sentiment that created a demand for the re-establishment of the caliphate after 656/1258 was partially attributable to the masses.²⁶⁴³ Widespread enthusiasm encircled both the caliphal office and the Abbasid family.²⁶⁴⁴ Islamic tradition remembered the Abbasids as the dynasty that had ousted the corrupt Umayyads and replaced them with sober and responsible religious rule. The “popular current” likely had its roots in the traditional role of the caliphate in medieval Islamic society, which in part, perpetuated and encouraged loyalty for the idea of the caliph. Even before the fall of Baghdad, the assumption that the caliphate held sovereignty over all the lands of Islam was upheld and even reinforced by *de*

²⁶⁴¹ The word *‘amma*, frequently used to refer to common people, carried a slightly negative connotation in distinction from “*khāṣṣa*,” the term for the elite. Although sources on the common people are scarce, there is a considerable amount of research on the social fabric and culture of medieval Cairo. See: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 3, 10-1. On the *‘amma* as a social group during the Mamluk period, see: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 143-84; Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 109-14; ‘Alā’ Ṭaha Rizq, *‘Ammat al-Qāhira fī ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk* (Giza, 2003), 33-54. On the Abbasid caliphate and its relationship with public opinion in Mamluk Cairo, see: Fāḍil Jābir Ḍāḥī and Asrā’ Mahdī Mizbān, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm fī ‘aṣr al-mamālīk* (Damascus, 2011), 43-65.

²⁶⁴² Mamluk sources provide numerous illustrations of this correlation: Abū Shāma described the tremendous delight (*surūran* ‘*azīman*) of the Syrian population upon the 659/1261 investiture of the caliph al-Mustansir in Cairo (‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismā‘īl Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa-al-sābi‘*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Kawtharī (Beirut, 1974), 213). Al-Ṣafadī mentioned the grief and tears shed by the people (*al-nās*) in 737/1337 when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad exiled the caliph al-Mustakfī and the entire Abbasid clan of 100 souls to Qūṣ (*A’yān al-‘aṣr wa-a’wān al-naṣr*, ed. Māzin ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (Beirut, 1998), 2:420-1). Garcin found an instance of one irritable fourteenth century petitioner making an offhanded (though angry) remark on the seclusion of the caliph (Jean-Claude Garcin, “Histoire, opposition politique et piétisme traditionaliste dans le *Husn al-Muḥāḍarat* de Suyūṭī,” *Annales islamologiques* 7 (1967): 54). Later Mamluk sources commented on widespread jubilation over the caliph al-Musta‘īn’s investiture as sultan in 815/1412 (Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Inbā’ al-ghumr bi-abnā’ al-‘umr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 1969-98), 2:509; al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:86; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:825) and later the atmosphere of confusion and resentment that plagued local mosques after his deposition and exile to Alexandria (Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 4:303-4). Finally Ibn Iyās mentioned the great worry and sadness Cairenes felt concerning the fate of the last caliph after the Ottomans exiled him to Istanbul in 923/1517 (*Badā’i*, 5:183-85). One important instance of public opinion going *against* the caliph was in 709/1309 when the caliph al-Mustakfī invested the comparatively unpopular Baybars (II) al-Jāshinkīr as a candidate to stand against al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s incoming third reign (Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, Vol. 32, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad ‘Ulwī Shaltūt (Cairo: Maṭaba‘at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1998), 146). There was apparently mutual influence exerted between the expectations of the masses and the regime’s policies. Although popular uprisings were not uncommon, the Mamluk elite could often afford to ignore the anxieties of their subject population in regard to matters such as grain prices, or the abusive policies of Mamluk officials and amirs. See: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 51-5, 147-9; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 66-7; idem, “Grain Riots and the “Moral Economy”: Cairo, 1350-1517,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10, no. 3 (1980): 459-78.

²⁶⁴³ Some modern Arabic scholarship accuses the Mamluks of exploiting the common people’s “love for the caliphate,” and also claims that the people themselves were willing to risk punishment or reprisals in exchange for demonstrating that love. See: Ṭarkhān, *Miṣr*, 62; Ḍāḥī, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm*, 60, 62.

²⁶⁴⁴ Abū Shāma, *Tarājim*, 213.

facto independent rulers who still took pains to present themselves as faithful servants of the caliph.²⁶⁴⁵

In the absence of sources left behind by literate members of the *‘amma* describing their own sentiments towards the caliphate, we must rely on the circumstantial remarks and hearsay of the educated classes who engaged in historiography, and as religious scholars and bureaucrats, who had ties to the ruling regime. Although some modern historians have suggested that these historians, Sufi *shaykhs*, and *‘ulamā*’ reliably reflect public opinion, we must, in most cases (with the exception, perhaps, of Ibn Iyās), resist the temptation to suggest that their views consistently represented the voice of the *‘amma*.²⁶⁴⁶ It is difficult, if not impossible, to gauge the degree of interest and support which the caliphs drew from the people. Mamluk sources also tend to be inconsistent in their use of the Arabic term *al-nās* as an appellation of the citadel elite, or as a blanket designation which included the *‘amma*.²⁶⁴⁷ Mamluk chroniclers and biographers recount several incidents demonstrating the relationship between the collective public mood and the fate of the caliph. While reflective of a popular demand for general well-being in matters of religion, reports on the public reaction towards affairs of the caliphate tend to be non-specific.

After the caliphate had been established and an Abbasid presence firmly lodged in Cairo after 660/1262, people again placed stock in the institution, and unrest could be stoked among all classes (amirs, *‘ulamā*’, and the masses) if ever the office or the man holding it was disturbed or perceived to have been insulted. The events of the year 656/1258 were a fresh memory and the trauma of Hülāgū’s invasion surely left a scar. The Abbasid presence in Cairo provided Muslims with a sense that the political and cosmic order of the universe had been restored in the wake of catastrophe.

Mamluk sultans seemed to have been attuned to the mood of the *‘amma* as they sculpted their policies toward the Abbasid caliphate. Baybars’s investiture ceremonies were a major appeal to public opinion, and the Mamluk sultan invited members of his subject population (including

²⁶⁴⁵ Barthold, “Caliph and Sultan,” 130-5.

²⁶⁴⁶ Wilferd Madelung, “A Treatise on the Imamate Dedicated to Sultan Baybars I,” in *Proceedings of the 14th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Part 1*, ed. A. Fodor (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University Chair for Arabic Studies & Csoma de Kőrös Society, Section of Islamic Studies, 1995), 102; Dāhī, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm*, 60. Irmeli Perho has studied the ways in which some Mamluk historians portrayed the *‘amma*. See: “Al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī Birdī as Historians of Contemporary Events,” in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950-1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 107-20.

²⁶⁴⁷ An understanding of the social classes in medieval Cairo is obscured by inconsistent terminology. In terms of class hierarchy, after the ruling military elite (*khāṣṣ*) and the civilian notables (*a’yān*), came the *‘amma*, followed by those of even lower social standing known alternately as the *arādhil*, *awbāsh*, *ghawghā* or *ḥarāfīsh*, “whose activities or occupations put them beyond the reach of polite society: prostitutes, usurers, professional entertainers, tanners, beggars, as well as rambunctious crowds more generally.” See: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 79-85; Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 386.

Jews and Christians) to witness the numerous festivities featuring the caliph.²⁶⁴⁸ In 785/1383, after rumors of a coup led by the caliph al-Mutawakkil, Barqūq had desired to publicly execute the Commander of the Faithful, but fears of a popular uprising ultimately stayed his hand.²⁶⁴⁹ Desperate to stay in power amidst a revolt led by Syrian amirs, Barqūq courted the support of the *‘amma* through several public appearances with the caliph at his side.²⁶⁵⁰

The idea of order and unity amongst the *umma* was a supreme concern regardless of the reigning caliph’s physical ability or resources to accomplish it. After Barqūq’s victory over Minṭāsh in early 792/1390, the Mamluk sultan recaptured al-Mutawakkil and the qadis. Amidst great confusion in the wake of the battle, the Syrian historian Ibn Ṣaṣrā recorded that while many awaited news of the outcome, “the people of Damascus, meanwhile, became disheartened, because neither the sultan nor the caliph came to them.”²⁶⁵¹ Likewise, during the initial stages of the Ottoman occupation of Syria and Egypt, the caliph served as an important symbol of continuity which the conquerors used to reassure the people.²⁶⁵²

Even with the caliph barred behind the citadel walls for much of the Mamluk period, Muslims sporadically had the occasion to reaffirm their relationship with the Commander of the Faithful if the authorities allowed mention of the reigning Abbasid’s name in Friday prayers along with the Mamluk sultan.²⁶⁵³ The caliph’s presence in the Mamluk capital had meaning not only to the Egyptian ruling class who ceremoniously expected the caliph to make prayers for the state along with other key religious dignitaries, but also at the local level where people prayed for

²⁶⁴⁸ Ḍāḥī, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm*, 46-55.

²⁶⁴⁹ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 3:110. See also: Wiederhold, “Zahiri Revolt,” 213-4; Ḍāḥī, *al-Ra’y al-‘amm*, 62.

²⁶⁵⁰ Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 234.

²⁶⁵¹ Muḥammad ibn Ṣaṣrā, *al-Durra al-muḍī’a fī al-dawla al-Zāhiriyya*, ed. and tr. William M. Brinner as *A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389-1397* (Berkeley, 1963), 1:76 (English), 2:50 (Arabic).

²⁶⁵² Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 5:157-8.

²⁶⁵³ Medieval Muslims attached great significance to the ruler named in the Friday sermon. After 656/1258, the practice of naming the caliph alone became largely inconsistent. In Mamluk territory, the Abbasid caliph seems to have been named with some regularity until the dismissal of al-Wāthiq and the succession of al-Ḥākim II in 741-2/1341. The name of the caliph was then removed from the *khuṭba* for many years until al-Musta’in became sultan in 815/1412. In the confusion following Marj Dābiq in 923/1516, some Egyptian mosques made Friday prayers in the name of the Abbasid caliph after the death of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in battle and Ṭūmānbāy’s flight from the citadel. Members of the *‘ulamā’* may also have demonstrated an interest in linking themselves to the legacy of the Abbasids, as many mosque orators “routinely dressed in black, the color of the ‘Abbasids, since the delivery of the Friday sermon was an official act that included an explicit acknowledgment of the nominal suzerainty of the ‘Abbasid caliph.” See: Berkey, *Transmission of Knowledge*, 183. See also: Becker, “Barthold’s Studien” 369; L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume: A Survey* (Genève: A. Kundig, 1952), 15; Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 82; Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State*, 117-8; Albrecht Fuess, “Sultans with Horns: The Political Significance of Headgear in the Mamluk Empire,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 2 (2008): 75-6.

him in turn, urging God to set right the affairs of the caliphate, and preserve the caliph, who, after all, was widely considered to be *ibn ‘amm rasūl Allāh*, the “cousin” of God’s messenger.²⁶⁵⁴

Boaz Shoshan has observed that the cult of Sufi saints proved both influential and provided common ground between the masses and the broader culture and sensibilities of the other classes of Mamluk Cairo including the Mamluk elite, as well as the scholarly and notable classes.²⁶⁵⁵ In this regard, we may also hypothesize that the idea of the caliphate could serve as an important symbol with the potential to provide a similar brand of unity among the various cultures of the class strata of medieval Cairo.²⁶⁵⁶

The caliphs themselves were never more accessible to ordinary Cairenes as they might have been during their maintenance of the Nafīsī shrine beginning in the mid-fourteenth century. Nowhere else could outsiders to the worlds of Mamluk politics and official religion cross paths with the Abbasid caliph. The caliph himself was said to have held court in the shrine, as he sat inside looking on as pilgrims came with donations for the chest and to pay respects to the legacies of Sayyida Nafīsa (and presumably the Abbasids).²⁶⁵⁷ Popular religious practices differed from the Islam of the learned people preserved in source-books.²⁶⁵⁸ The presence of the caliph implied a kind of official recognition of the popular religious practices of the *‘amma* who cherished and revered figures like Sayyida Nafīsa. Involvement with the shrine exemplifies the ability of the caliph to straddle the political and religious worlds of the citadel as well as the realm of popular piety, the lines between which were often blurred in the Mamluk period.²⁶⁵⁹

²⁶⁵⁴ This notion is partially illustrated by local prayers made after the deposition of the caliph-sultan al-Musta‘īn. See: al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:273-4; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63.

²⁶⁵⁵ Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 76-8.

²⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 67. See also: Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 377, 409-10. Caution must be exercised with the use of the word “culture.” The debate over the idea of a “popular culture” in Mamluk society has received considerable attention in recent scholarship. See: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 6-8; Jonathan P. Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 9-11; idem, “Popular Culture under the Mamluks: A Historiographical Survey,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005), 133-46; Thomas Herzog, “Mamluk (Popular) Culture. The State of Research,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 131-58.

²⁶⁵⁷ Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-i‘tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (London, 2002), 3:785; idem, *Durar al-‘uqūd al-farīda fī tarājīm al-a‘yān al-mufīda*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Jalīlī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), 3:293; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:245; Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafīsa,” 42; Garcin, “The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks,” 303; Ohtoshi Tetsuya, “Cairene Cemeteries as Public Loci in Mamluk Egypt,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10, no. 1 (2006): 101-2. It is difficult to comment on the frequency and level of interaction between the caliph and the masses, though there was apparently an association nurtured by the caliph’s presence at the shrine.

²⁶⁵⁸ On “popular religion” in Mamluk Cairo, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 10-22.

²⁶⁵⁹ There appears to be another instance of this in the 690/1291 *khuṭba* attributed to al-Hākim in 690/1291. While the Mamluks were interested in auspicious astrological alignments before battle, it seems evident that the caliph’s *khuṭba* deliberately touched upon astral formations they would have found vital although it might not be subject matter one often would hear from conservative *‘ulamā’*. Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Alṭāf*, 14.

The notion that the Abbasid caliphate *had* no resonance with the masses of Muslim subjects in Mamluk territory is a hasty conclusion considering the numerous hints of popular resentment whenever the Mamluks were seen as oppressors of the caliph, which proves interesting assuming the reports go beyond exaggeration.²⁶⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it remains to be said that despite reverence for the caliphate based on Islamic tradition, so long as the masses could count on stability, live in peace, access affordable grain, were not heavily taxed, and able to settle their contracts and disputes in functional courts (Islamic and otherwise), the majority likely cared little about the *true* position of the caliph as a mostly ceremonial figure so long as it, like the sultanate, provided the image of stability and legitimacy.²⁶⁶¹ The expectation was that the caliph, based on the dictates of culture and tradition, should, at the very least, be a figure who commanded respect at court.²⁶⁶² In general, the subject population of Mamluk Cairo was likely divided between seeing the Abbasid caliphate as a symbol of Islamic cultural tradition that was taken for granted as part of the social fabric, and also as a more stationary symbol of rule by the foreign Mamluks who took equal measures both in emphasizing their “otherness” and in demonstrating their ties to Islamic culture, to their Arabic-speaking Cairene subjects.²⁶⁶³

However, the Abbasid caliphate does not always appear to have been well-remembered at the local level, at least among popular storytellers. The so-called *Sīrat Baybars* literature, the folkloric epic read and performed in the urban Cairo coffeehouses of the late fourteenth and fifteenth century and beyond, celebrated the life achievements of Baybars and provides yet another image of the caliphate.²⁶⁶⁴ Despite the pomp and celebration of the historical Baybars’s investiture of the caliph al-Mustanşir, the caliphate is completely absent in the popular life story of the Mamluk sultan, who in some versions, is referred to as Commander of the Faithful.²⁶⁶⁵ Some Egyptian manuscripts of the *Sīrat Baybars* dating to the late fourteenth century mention only the last Baghdad caliph al-Musta‘şim, who, through his own frivolity and inability to apply

It is also useful to recall that the short-reigning caliph al-Wāthiq II (785-8/1383-6) had been a noted practitioner of geomancy. See: Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:201.

²⁶⁶⁰ See note 2642 above.

²⁶⁶¹ Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 234. For some of the socio-political expectations of common people in medieval Cairo, see: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 55-8.

²⁶⁶² This is exemplified by moments of popular outrage described in the sources when certain caliphs were deposed or exiled.

²⁶⁶³ Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 391-3.

²⁶⁶⁴ Very little is known about the origins and development of this literature. See: Malcolm C. Lyons, *The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-Telling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1:13-5; Thomas Herzog, “The First Layer of the *Sīrat Baybars*: Popular Romance and Political Propaganda,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (2003): 137-8; idem, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 12-6.

²⁶⁶⁵ Jean Claude Garcin, “Récit d’une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars” in *L’Orient au cœur en l’honneur d’André Miquel*, ed. F. Sanagustin (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001), 252. See also: Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 331-3, 343; idem, “Legitimität durch Erzählung,” 260.

justice, was complicit in his fall from power and saddled with the blunder of allowing Baghdad to fall to the Mongols.²⁶⁶⁶

Rather than the legitimacy of caliphal investiture, the various authors and narrators of the *Sīrat Baybars* gave existence to a daughter named Shajar al-Durr, who in many early versions of the epic, is not the historical concubine turned queen of Egypt, but instead re-imagined as an Abbasid princess wed to the Ayyubid sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb. After al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb's acquisition of the young slave Baybars, the future Mamluk sultan becomes their "son" and thus in the *sīra* construction, through Shajar al-Durr, Abbasid legitimacy passes to Baybars and the caliphate is integrated into the sultanate.²⁶⁶⁷

Thomas Herzog suggests that the *sīra* reflects the historical reality of the Abbasid caliph of Cairo, who, following the tradition set into motion by Baybars, was kept out of view just as he was kept out of the popular narrative.²⁶⁶⁸ Garcin also proposes that given that some of the manuscripts were produced in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, the lack of mention of caliphal ceremonies and the negative depiction of al-Musta'ṣim may have been tied to a contemporary current of anti-Abbasid propaganda related to Barqūq's political struggles with al-Mutawakkil in the late 1380s, when the caliph allegedly involved himself in the schemes of resurgent Qalawunid amirs against the Circassian upstart. The brief sultanate of al-Musta'ṣim in the early fifteenth century also "disturbed" the Mamluk status quo for six months.²⁶⁶⁹ Is it possible that redactors of the *Sīrat Baybars* absorbed an anti-caliphal tone in the air disseminated by the Mamluk elite? This is one hypothesis, though even if slightly denigrated in the *sīra* literature, Abbasid legitimacy was of great use to Barqūq on his return to power and the deposition of al-Musta'ṣim from the sultanate was not without some upset on the popular level.

2. The Mamluk Conception of Caliphate

That the caliph should bestow his powers on a strongman and be left as the nominal head of the religious community was an old idea by the late thirteenth century, and in many ways, the Mamluk system was the logical continuation of earlier Sunni political traditions predicated on delegation by the Abbasid caliphate.²⁶⁷⁰ As an office, the sultanate had developed at the height of

²⁶⁶⁶ Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 333-9; idem, "Legitimität durch Erzählung," 263-6.

²⁶⁶⁷ Behrens-Abouseif, "Maḥmal Legend," 91-2; Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 331-2.

²⁶⁶⁸ Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 331.

²⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 353-4, 406, 411. See also: Garcin, "Récit d'une recherche," 256.

²⁶⁷⁰ Gaudefroy-Demombynes saw the Mamluk sultanate as the evolution of al-Māwardī's "wazīr of delegation" (*amīr al-tafwīd*) which the latter had originally used to describe the historical appearance of the Turkish *amīrs al-umarā'* that had usurped power from the ninth century Abbasid caliphs, and for

eleventh century Seljuq power and “coexisted with [a] much reduced caliphate, intertwining loyalties and forcing a re-assessment of the purpose and structure of political power.”²⁶⁷¹ In the late eleventh/early twelfth century, al-Ghazālī believed that the caliph should no longer rule his subjects politically, and recognized that Muslims belonged to two communities: the first, led by the caliph, was the modern incarnation of the Prophet’s *umma*, while the second, under the sultan, was the secular or political community that paid taxes and enjoyed military protection.²⁶⁷² The sultan supplied the power, while the caliph symbolized the moral *raison d’être*. The sultan “lent” power to the caliph and served as his executive (through *tafwīḍ*), thereby acknowledging that power came from beyond the religious institution.²⁶⁷³ According to Ulrich Haarmann, the Mamluks simply brought al-Ghazālī’s theories to life in Cairo.²⁶⁷⁴

In juridical terms, the caliphs retained sovereignty which was perpetually transmitted among the descendants of al-Ḥākim. The sultans, chosen in reality by the Mamluk factions, received caliphal investiture and were delegated with full powers including the ability to command, forbid, and be obeyed in accordance with the authority of the classical caliphate.²⁶⁷⁵ In contrast to the distant Buyid, Seljuq, or Ayyubid family members who had to petition the caliphs of Baghdad for investiture deeds, the Abbasid caliph of Cairo lived locally in the citadel or the nearby al-Kabsh neighborhood, and was a notable attendant at all Mamluk accession ceremonies. This “on-site” caliph provided both convenience and an air of immediacy to Mamluk pageantry that few other previous or contemporary Muslim sultans could boast of save for those that had enjoyed direct control of the caliph through a military presence in Abbasid Baghdad.

A. Mamluk Reluctance to Break with Successful Strategy

Unlike their many contemporaries and enemies who wished to expand territorial gains, the Mamluks succumbed to a kind of “fortress mentality.”²⁶⁷⁶ Although Mamluk institutions and political traditions, many based on earlier examples, evolved in accordance with the milieu, the

Gaudefroy-Demombynes, represented a convincing forerunner of the Mamluk sultan, who, unlike the *amīr al-umarāʾ*, sought caliphal investiture. See: *Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxix.

²⁶⁷¹ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 183.

²⁶⁷² Crone, *God’s Rule*, 240-4.

²⁶⁷³ Ibid. See also: Lambton, *State and Government*, 112.

²⁶⁷⁴ “Rather the Injustice of the Turks than the Righteousness of the Arabs: Changing ‘Ulamā’ Attitudes Towards Mamluk Rule in the Late Fifteenth Century,” *Studia Islamica* 68 (1988): 62.

²⁶⁷⁵ Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxi; Dominique Sourdel, “Khalīfa,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*², (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4:937-47.

²⁶⁷⁶ Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 283-4.

Mamluks preserved their ideological and territorial heritage without much change.²⁶⁷⁷ With its status-quo oriented military elite, and the ‘*ulamā*’ mired in Haarmann’s “petrified conservatism,” it may well have been political inertia that maintained the importance of the Abbasid house in the years after Baybars.²⁶⁷⁸ The regime’s continued hosting of the Abbasid caliphate may be partially explained by the fact that on the whole, the Mamluks disliked change, and institutions such as the caliphate and sultanate became a critical (and comfortable) factor for its political process.²⁶⁷⁹ Upholding majority views was also an important part of the early Mamluk war effort against the Mongols, interested, as the Mamluks were, in attracting civilian cooperation and the support of the masses who provided labor and other contributions for martial endeavors.²⁶⁸⁰ Ideologically and theoretically, the Mamluks *behaved* as though the caliphs were indispensable to the maintenance and functioning of the regime throughout the span of their sultanate.

B. Legitimation & Prestige

The caliphate held particular importance to the Mamluks as an office the sultans themselves could never aspire to due to the prerequisite of Qurayshī (or even Arab) descent, while an office such as the sultanate posed no such problems.²⁶⁸¹ The constancy of the Abbasid caliphate in the course of changing policies slowly reinforced its position.²⁶⁸²

²⁶⁷⁷ The geographical layout of Egypt encouraged the Mamluks to adopt a centralized state on the Ayyubid model, and thus they found themselves protectors of a “fixed territorial appanage confined to the Nile valley, Syrian littoral and western Arabia (Ḥijāz), marches of southeast Anatolia.” See: Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, 182; Holt, “Position and Power,” 237; Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 17; idem, “Late Mamlūk Military Institution and Innovation,” 463; R. Stephen Humphreys, “Egypt in the World System of the Later Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume I, Islamic Egypt, 640-1517*, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 453.

²⁶⁷⁸ Haarmann, “Injustice of the Turks,” 62; Berkey, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 12.

²⁶⁷⁹ Jo Van Steenbergen, *Order Out of Chaos: Patronage, Conflict and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341-1382* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 15.

²⁶⁸⁰ Northrup, “The Bahrī Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” 269.

²⁶⁸¹ Brinner, “Struggle for Power,” 233; Richard W. Bulliet, “The History of the Muslim South,” *Al-‘Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists* 20, no. 2 (2008): 63; idem, “Neo-Mamluk Legitimacy and the Arab Spring,” *Middle East Law and Governance* 3, no. 1-2 (2011): 63. Throughout the Mamluk period, the ‘*ulamā*’ maintained the stipulation that the office-holder of the caliphate had to have Qurayshī and Hashimite credentials, both of which were often inserted into a reigning caliph’s genealogical chain. They also honored the demands of tradition which stated that the caliph had to be a member of the Abbasid family. These non-negotiable criteria for the caliphate were widely agreed upon among the men of religion. See: Laoust, *Essai*, 45; Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue,” 18; Northrup, “The Bahrī Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” 269. Michael Chamberlain has observed that in medieval Eurasia (including the Middle East), the enduring legacy of universal empires (whether caliphs, popes, or emperors) allowed invading horse warriors to derive legitimacy from sacral figures that played a role which other rulers could not. See: *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 28-30.

²⁶⁸² Garcin, “Histoire,” 58. The political traditions established by Baybars carried the caliphal office forward until it was absorbed as part of the cultural fabric by later sultans and military men. As some early

In their ceremonial dealings with the Abbasids, Mamluk sultans sought to communicate authority, faith, and ideas of empire to their subject masses. They also wanted to demonstrate a proximity to old Arab aristocracy and a sacred lineage that linked their own position to the Prophet.²⁶⁸³ Thus the caliph remained a viable legitimizer since he was venerated as a symbol of religion among the Muslim people and delegation from his office carried considerable prestige for his deputy.²⁶⁸⁴ Exclusive access to the Abbasid line furnished the Mamluk sultanate with distinction in the face of rival Muslim competitors in the post-Mongol Islamic world.²⁶⁸⁵ In light of the prestige available from the caliphate, the most important function filled by the caliphs was the on-demand performance of the caliphal *bay'a* or mutual *mubāya'a*, known also as the “caliphal honor” (*al-tashrīf al-khalīfātī*) for whomever among the ruling class of amirs was strong enough to seize power and thereafter require Abbasid recognition as the *finale*.²⁶⁸⁶ At times of succession, the caliphs provided stability amid the frequent turnover of sultans and ruling amirs. The silent presence of the Abbasid caliph symbolically affirmed that God, the Prophet, and the ‘*ulamā*’ likewise approved of whatever new outcome had emerged from the power struggle. This was particularly crucial if the sultan proved unable to attach himself to the previous order in any other way. Keeping the caliph safely apart from the population also provided a means for the ruling sultan to frustrate the aspirations of rival claimants.²⁶⁸⁷

twentieth century scholars have pointed out, in uncertain political times, Abbasid authority had the power to protect Mamluk candidates with a degree of legalism. See: Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 370; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *La Syrie à l’époque des mamelouks*, xxix.

²⁶⁸³ Research suggests that Baybars, in his specifications for the caliphs’ lineage, ordered compilers to go back as far as the Prophet and the Rāshidūn caliphs, even though historically, none of the Abbasids could have been their true descendants. See: Heidemann, *Das aleppiner Kalifat*, 70-5.

²⁶⁸⁴ Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)* (Stuttgart, 1998), 167. Many scholars have argued persuasively that the Mamluks only used the caliphate and sultanate when they wished to court the support of the people, or if an amir required legitimacy. The legitimating function of the Abbasid caliphs was by far the most immediate political benefit for the Mamluk sultanate. See: Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:38-9; Brinner, “The Struggle for Power in the Mamluk State,” 233; Holt, “Some Observations,” 501-3; Reuven Amitai-Preiss: “The Fall and Rise of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 3 (1996): 487; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 14-5; Albrecht Fuess, “Mamluk Politics,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 96-9.

²⁶⁸⁵ Arjomand, “Legitimacy and Political Organisation,” 251.

²⁶⁸⁶ Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 11:3; idem, *Manhal*, 3:287; idem, *Mawrid al-laṭāfa fī man waliya al-salṭana wa-al-khilāfa*, ed. Nabīl Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Aḥmad (Cairo, 1997), 1:263; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:120; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn Surūr, *Dawlat Banī Qalāwūn fī Miṣr: al-ḥāla al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya fī ‘ahdhā bi-wajhin khāṣṣ* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1947), 85.

²⁶⁸⁷ It seems fitting that the sultans wished to keep such “men of power” from mixing with undesirables, rabble, or becoming influenced or corrupted by their enemies. Rather, the rulers wanted the caliphs to be quietly communicating with God, contemplating, and teaching. Al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh had been shocked by the prospect of al-Musta‘īn corresponding with rival amirs or busying himself in the affairs of ruling.

As a symbol of legitimation tied chiefly to *jihād* in the first fifty years of the Mamluk sultanate, the Abbasid caliph strengthened the image of the sultan as his delegate, and as a true warrior for the faith.²⁶⁸⁸ To formulate their political ideology against the backdrop of the threat of the Mongols and Crusaders, the Mamluk sultans worked with their military men, as well as the religious advisors and members of the bureaucracy capable of connecting them to the religious culture that pervaded their subject lands.²⁶⁸⁹ The Mamluks defined their ideological model based on Islamic concepts of military protection for the Muslims, their land, property and society, as well as the *sharīʿa*, the caliphate, the pilgrimage, and the holy cities.²⁶⁹⁰

By the end of the fifteenth century, awareness of the notion of universal empire under the Abbasid caliphate (stationed in Cairo and bound to the Mamluk sultan) spread throughout the polities of the central Islamic world. Since brief ascendancies of one regime over another seldom led to wider cultural or religious discontinuity, local rivalries in Cairo did not damage these principles.²⁶⁹¹ Thus, until the fall of the Mamluk regime in 923/1517, the Abbasid caliphate remained a recognizable feature of Mamluk rule, and one which contributed, perhaps, to a broader regional identity.

C. Caliphal Titulary

The title *khalīfa* appears with some regularity in Mamluk narrative sources, though it shared importance with *amīr al-muʿminīn*, the unique caliphal epithet associated with notions of the Qurayshī, Hashimite caliphate. Mamluk sultans and amirs, some of whom were hesitant to adopt the title because of its potent symbolism, chose instead to append it to their own titles such as *qasīm amīr al-muʿminīn* or *sayf amīr al-muʿminīn*.²⁶⁹²

²⁶⁸⁸ Holt, "Position and Power," 246-7; idem, "Structure of Government," 47-8.

²⁶⁸⁹ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 14.

²⁶⁹⁰ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 12-5; idem, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 94-5. Religion was necessarily important to the Mamluks in their posturing as protectors of Islam. Their interest in religious affairs can be linked in some ways to their political concerns. See: Berkey, "Culture and Society," 393; Fuess, "Mamluk Politics," 96-9.

²⁶⁹¹ Carl F. Petry, "Late Mamlūk Military Institution and Innovation," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 463.

²⁶⁹² The Mamluks by no means monopolized the *khalīfa* title, though few contemporary rulers appear to have made much use of *amīr al-muʿminīn* in their titulature, perhaps due to its associations with ideas of old, particularly Arab and Qurayshī aristocracy. The Ottomans seemed largely uninterested in *amīr al-muʿminīn* until the end of their rule. Arnold has suggested that *amīr al-muʿminīn* disappeared for some time after the last Abbasid caliph of Cairo. Nevertheless, the titles attributed to Selim after Marj Dābiq by the historian Ibn Zunbul include "*khalīfat Allāh*" and "*amīr al-muʿminīn*." See: *Taʾrīkh ghazwat al-Sultān Salīm maʿ Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004), 11. For a discussion of caliphal titles in the Mamluk period, see: Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:35-6.

The term *khalīfa* was a more ambiguous inter-regional title in the Later Middle Period used frequently as a title of courtesy for many rulers outside of Mamluk territory.²⁶⁹³ Thus it is somewhat difficult to delineate a precise meaning for the term during the mid-thirteenth to the early sixteenth century.²⁶⁹⁴

In their own experiments with Abbasid legitimacy and the legacy of its titlature, the Mamluks could explore two interpretations in hope of capitalizing on universal caliphal legitimacy. The first was the idea of the caliph as *khalīfat Allāh*, God's deputy or chosen "successor" on the earth which implied divine authority.²⁶⁹⁵ Alternately, the caliph could be *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, which implied successorship to Muḥammad's political and religious authority. Arguably, both understandings (which associated the authority of the caliph to that of God or the Prophet) had equal importance. The image of the caliph, as an important descendant and family member of the Prophet, was especially important in Mamluk investiture deeds composed by the 'ulamā' and scribal classes.²⁶⁹⁶ Many Mamluks had origins leading back to the Eurasian steppe which often understood notions that sovereignty stemmed from God's favor for the victorious in battle. Thus members of the ruling elite may have preferred the idea that the authority of the caliph was divine in that he was the lieutenant of God on earth (*nā'ib Allāh fi arḍihi*), and thus as the rightful delegate of the caliph, the Mamluk sultan likewise held power by divine right.²⁶⁹⁷

Nevertheless, some titlature blurred the lines between caliph and sultan. Jo Van Steenberghe observed that in panegyric for the Qalawunid al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl (743-6/1342-5), the

²⁶⁹³ Many rulers including the Timurids, Aq Qoyunlu, Delhi Sultans, Rūm Seljuqs, Ozbegs, and Ottomans used the terms "*khalīfa*" and "*khilāfa*" in their panegyrics, official correspondence, etc. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 379-87; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 107-20; Sourdel, "*Khalīfah*."

²⁶⁹⁴ Hodgson writes that in this period, "the caliphal title came to be applied (on the initiative of the Falasūfs) to any regional ruler who was regarded as upholding the Sharī'ah for the time being." See: *Venture of Islam*, 2:453. A popular notion among Muslim rulers in this period was that a sovereign's dignity was determined by his level of power and the overall nature of his reign, rather than through his relationship with the caliph. See: Becker, "Barthold's Studien," 374.

²⁶⁹⁵ This title had been objectionable to the majority of Sunni 'ulamā' since the Umayyad period. It is explored at length in Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For al-Māwardī's discussion of caliphal titles, see: *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭānīya*, 17-8.

²⁶⁹⁶ The resident Abbasid provided the Mamluks with an instantly accessible connection to God and the Prophet, which, in the investiture deeds, somewhat outweighed the caliphs' other inherent link to eighth and ninth century Abbasid glory. However, the Abbasid family connection to the Prophet maintained importance in literature composed by the 'ulamā'.

²⁶⁹⁷ Sourdel, "*Khalīfah*." D. S. Margoliouth suggested that shrewd rulers from the Buyid Mu'izz al-Dawla (d. 356/967) down to Baybars sought to promote an image of Abbasid authority which set forth the caliph as God's lieutenant (*khalīfat Allāh*) as opposed to successor of the Prophet, in hope that their own power might be more easily associated with that of God. See: "The Sense of the Title Khalīfah," in *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E. G. Browne*, ed. T. W. Arnold and R. A. Nicholson (Cambridge, 1922), 323-4, 328.

sultan is described as “elevator of the head of the faithful” (*rāfi‘ ra’s al-mu‘minīn*) which may be a synonym for the caliph, as it subsumes his role as Commander of the Faithful.²⁶⁹⁸ This was not an impossibility, however, as Baybars had been referred to as “Commander of the Faithful” in the *sīra* literature, and by the end of the Mamluk sultanate, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, at least in court, appropriated some of the more blatant caliphal epithets including *amīr al-mu‘minīn* and *khalīfat al-Islām*.²⁶⁹⁹ Sultanate investiture deeds, which highlighted the caliph’s delegation of power to the sultan also provided a venue in which the role of the caliph, including his titles and office were also occasionally borrowed by the sultan.

3. Sultans, Sufis, and Caliphs: Mamluks and Their Holy Men

While mapping the legitimacy, charismatic blessings (*baraka*), and perceived spiritual protection (*al-ḥimāya al-rūḥiyya*) ascribed to the Abbasid caliphs at the Mamluk court, it is difficult to ignore the parallels with the Sufi personnel and institutions patronized by many of the Mamluk sultans. By the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century, the influence of Sufism enjoyed widespread acceptance among every level of Middle Eastern Islamic society.²⁷⁰⁰ The Islamic identity of the Mamluks encouraged the extensive patronage of a multitude of mosques and Sufi structures including *khānqāhs*, *ribāṭs*, and *zāwiya*s.²⁷⁰¹

In addition to their posts as *imāms*, mosque orators, spiritual advisors, and *madrasa* teachers providing guidance to the community, most members of the religious establishment also had formal Sufi affiliations.²⁷⁰² If Mamluk practices involving the Abbasid caliphate were not directly inspired by the influence of Sufism, they at least shared some common terminology. The word *khalīfa* itself, referred to the Commander of the Faithful’s position as successor of the

²⁶⁹⁸ Van Steenberghe, “Qalāwūnīd Discourse,” 8. See also: Ibrāhīm al-Qaysarānī, *al-Nūr al-lā’ih wa-al-durr al-ṣādīḥ fī iṣṭifā’ mawlānā al-sultān al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (Abū al-Fidā’ ‘Imad al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ibn al-Nāsir Muḥammad ibn al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn) (743-746 H. / 1342-1345 M.)* ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Tripoli, Lebanon, 1982), 49. (Al-Qaysarānī’s only other mention of the caliphate comes in a section on Ayyubid sultans in which, after the fall of the Fatimids, the Ayyubids restore the *khutba* to the name of the Abbasid caliphs in whose family the “caliphate has continued until now.” (54)).

²⁶⁹⁹ Al-Ḥusaynī, *Nafā’is*, 86-7.

²⁷⁰⁰ On Sufism in Mamluk domains and the state of scholarship, see: Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 370-84; Thomas Emil Homerin, “Saving Muslim Souls: The *Khānqāh* and the Sufi Duty in Mamluk Lands,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 65-83; idem, “Sufism in Mamluk Studies: A Review of Scholarship in the Field,” in *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies – State of the Art*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 187-202; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 10-22; Berkeley, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 19. On the general importance of Sufism to the Later Middle Period, see: Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, 184-8; idem, *Venture of Islam*, 2:201-54; Voll, “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” 9-11.

²⁷⁰¹ Donald P. Little, “Religion under the Mamluks,” *Muslim World* 73 (1983): 172.

²⁷⁰² Sufism was a central part of Mamluk religious life and Sufis comprised a notable portion of the religious class. See: Homerin “Sufism in Mamluk Studies,” 191.

Prophet, or, of God on earth. The ‘*ulamā*’ clung to their image of idealized unity represented by a *khalīfa* charged with rule over a human empire, while for the Sufis, *khalīfa* suggested man as a perfected microcosm.²⁷⁰³ However, Islamic mysticism retained the title *khalīfa* as a position of vice-regency to the spiritual knowledge of the Prophet (or as the subordinate or representative of a Sufi *shaykh*), with relevance on the esoteric plane, upon which the *khilāfat al-bāṭina*, which implied access to the hidden or secret knowledge of Islam, was the more important caliphate (*khilāfat al-kubrā*).

Several Mamluk investiture deeds reference the Abbasid caliph as the repository for the Muḥammadan secret or mystery (*sirr Muḥammadi*) implying that the caliph was privy to an unspecified aspect, essence, or element of the Prophet’s knowledge and spiritual heritage.²⁷⁰⁴ As a technical term in Sufism, *sirr* refers to notions of inner consciousness or being. Sufis protected the intrinsic knowledge of Islam (as well as their *silsila* links to the Prophet), just as according to the investiture deeds, the Abbasids protected a unique spiritual and familial bond with the Prophet.

Wilāya, a term used by investiture deeds to discuss the assignment of the caliph’s duties when the powers of the caliphate are delegated to another party,²⁷⁰⁵ can be thought of more generally as a kind of divine election that bestows power upon an office holder. The authority of the caliphate is divinely sanctioned and sanctified by God, just as the caliph’s delegation is to the Mamluk sultan. In the Sufi context, *wilāya* is of course the very idea of sainthood, which, like a delegated office, shares in the idea of sanctified power.

In the medieval Islamic world, *futuwwas*, the urban brotherhoods with strong links to the Sufi *ṭarīqas*, served as social clubs that engaged in pastimes such as wrestling, provided various social services including welcoming travelers, and might also serve as ancillary militia forces. In both of his caliphal investitures, Baybars had been intrigued by the idea of linking the Abbasid caliphate to the *futuwwa*.²⁷⁰⁶ Baybars had al-Mustanṣir dress him in special *futuwwa* garb and

²⁷⁰³ Hodgson, *Rethinking World History*, 187.

²⁷⁰⁴ For some examples, see: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:48; Abū Bakr ibn Ḥijja, *Kitāb qahwat al-inshāʾ*, ed. Rudolf Veselý (Beirut, 2005), 74.

²⁷⁰⁵ Al-Qalqashandī’s use of the term appears to imply little more than a delegated office of some kind.

²⁷⁰⁶ The official reasons for Baybars’s interest in reviving the *futuwwa* are unclear. Shortly before the fall of Baghdad, *futuwwa* brotherhoods had received influence at court during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh. *Futuwwas* behaved simultaneously as mutual aid networks, sport clubs, and professional guilds. If effectively mobilized, the organizations were also effective as urban militias. The *futuwwas* tended to be anti-establishment but their members maintained fierce loyalty to each other. Between 950-1150 aid from the *futuwwas* often proved the decisive factor in the outcomes of political and military struggles. Baybars may have been interested in the activities of the existing orders in Cairo and Syria and wished to direct their activities through his association with the caliph. Others have suggested that he wanted to be seen as a promoter of multiple classical Islamic institutions (caliphate and *futuwwa*) at

publicly induct him into the order, and the sultan later inducted the caliph al-Ḥākim.²⁷⁰⁷ The immediate successors of Baybars appeared to maintain the importance of investiture with *futuwwa* garments, issued documents associated with it, and inducted Mamluk amirs and foreign princes into it. Official Mamluk interest in the *futuwwas* gradually waned in Mamluk Egypt until its eventual disappearance by the ninth/fifteenth century.²⁷⁰⁸

A. Abbasid Caliphs as Holy Men

Similarities existed between the holy men of the Abbasid family and the Sufi *shaykhs* that enjoyed favor among the Mamluk sultans. Just as Abbasid descendants were believed to be in touch with supernatural forces capable of protecting the state, Sufis were likewise regarded as bearers of a special kind of influence or a transcendental spiritual aura which, in many ways, trumped the importance of the caliph. The arguably more fluid and dynamic *baraka* of the Sufi *shaykhs* was indeed different than that of the Abbasid caliph, which, to some extent, the Mamluks may have wished to keep separate from their reverence of those Sufis with a more pervasive brand of divine charisma.

To draw *baraka*, the sultans kept controversial religious figures as resident Sufi advisors at court.²⁷⁰⁹ Baybars took the eccentric Sufi guide Khiḍr al-Mihrānī into confidence, whose wild practices were viewed by many among the Mamluk elite with great suspicion.²⁷¹⁰ Baybars, Qalāwūn, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and their amirs established important Sufi structures and often appointed chief Sufis (*shaykh al-shuyūkh*) to name pupils and adepts to be in residence and lead rituals.²⁷¹¹ In the Mamluk court, other non-Abbasid descendants of the Prophet (*sayyids*) were often also on hand to supply blessings. During the reign of the Qalawunid sultan Sha‘bān (under

the same time. See: Angelika Hartmann, *An-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1180-1225): Politik, Religion, Kultur in der späten ‘Abbāsidenzeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 93-9, 111-8; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:129; Holt, “Virtuous Ruler,” 27-35; idem, “Some Observations,” 502-3; Hanne, *Putting the Caliph in his Place*, 204.

²⁷⁰⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 111, 145-7.

²⁷⁰⁸ Mamluk amirs invested with the *futuwwa* displayed it in their coats of arms. Members of the ‘ulamā’ also composed documents opposing the *futuwwas*. See: Claude Cahen and F. Taeschner, “Futuwwa” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*²; Robert Irwin, “Futuwwa: Chivalry and Gangsterism in Medieval Cairo,” *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 162.

²⁷⁰⁹ Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 242-3; idem, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 18.

²⁷¹⁰ Madelung, “Treatise on the Imamate,” 91. See also: Muḥammad al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-‘ibar fī khabar man ghabar* (Kuwait, 1960-6), 5:309; Aḥmad ibn Faḍlallāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-absār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2010), 15:279; L. Pouzet, “Ḥaḍir ibn Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī,” *Bulletin d’études orientales* 30 (1978) 173-83; P. M. Holt, “An Early Source on Shaykh Khaḍr al-Mihrānī,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 46 (1983) 33-9. Madelung believed Khaḍr may have been the author of the *Misbāḥ*, which in its second chapter takes a decidedly Sufi view of the imamate and advocates for an important role to be held by Sufi *shaykhs* at court alongside the *imām*, qadis, and influential ‘ulamā’. See: Madelung, “Treatise on the Imamate,” 96-9.

²⁷¹¹ Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 376; Homerin, “Saving Muslim Souls,” 66-7.

the tutelage of Yalbughā al-‘Umarī), in 773/1371-2, *sayyid* descendants of the Prophet received the unique courtesy of wearing special green badges appended to their turbans to indicate their nobility.²⁷¹²

As one might expect, overlap between Sufi holiness and the charisma of the Abbasid caliphate inevitably occurred when the regime invited Sufis to lend their sanctity to caliphal ceremonial. At the investiture ceremony for al-Mustansir, Baybars sat between the caliph as well as ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufi religious functionaries.²⁷¹³ After the death of the caliph al-Ḥākim in 701/1302, Sufi *shaykhs* were among the religious personnel summoned to attend the ceremony and the *shaykh al-shuyūkh* of the Sa‘īd al-Su‘adā *khānqā*, Karīm al-Dīn al-Āmulī, was a notable participant in the task of washing the caliph’s body and preparing other funerary procedures.²⁷¹⁴

Fond of attending Sufi retreats involving prayer, recitation, and dancing at desert *khānqās*,²⁷¹⁵ the Mamluk elite in the time of al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, amidst a crisis of plague outbreak, beseeched God to end the plague and encouraged the caliph at his right side and all other ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufis on his left, to lend their efforts.²⁷¹⁶

At the end of the Mamluk sultanate, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, en route to meet the Ottomans in 923/1516, sought to make a final showing of his dedication to Islam before engaging the Ottomans, left Aleppo joined by prominent ‘*ulamā*’ and Sufi *shaykhs* who had been ordered to display the insignias of their *ṭarīqas* on parade alongside the banners of the Abbasid caliphate.²⁷¹⁷

Although the majority of the Mamluk ‘*ulamā*’ were predisposed towards *ṭarīqa* Sufism, some members of the Sunni religious elite frowned on the sultans’ favorable tendency towards

²⁷¹² Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafā’*, 401. Al-Suyūṭī does not mention if the caliph sported a badge.

²⁷¹³ Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī al-Miṣrī, *Ḥusn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaza‘a min al-sīra al-Ẓāhiriyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Khuwayṭir (Riyadh, 1976), 37; Muḥammad ibn al-Kutubī, *‘Uyūn al-tawārīkh*, ed. Fayṣal al-Sāmīr and Nabīla ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Dāwūd (Baghdad, 1980), 20:252; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:2:449; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 7:109. On these religious functionaries as an important part of a tripartite civilian elite, see: Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 322-3.

²⁷¹⁴ Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta’rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), 362; idem, *Kitāb al-tuḥfa al-mulūkiyya fī al-dawla al-Turkiyya: Tārīkh dawlat al-mamālīk al-Baḥriyya fī al-fatra min 648-711 hijriyya* (Cairo, 1987), 162; Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mir‘āt al-Zamān*, ed. and tr. Li Guo as *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī’s Dhayl Mir‘āt al-zamān* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1:202 (English), 2:250 (Arabic); ‘Umar ibn al-Wardī, *Ta’rīkh ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf, 1969), 2:357; Ibrāhīm ibn Duqmāq, *al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī siyar al-khulafā’ wa-al-mulūk wa-al-salāṭīn* (Mecca, 1982), 187; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:3:919; Maḥmūd al-‘Aynī, *‘Iqd al-jumān fī ta’rīkh ahl al-zamān: ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo, 1987), 4:189-90; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 2:62.

²⁷¹⁵ Homerin, “Saving Muslim Souls,” 70.

²⁷¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:1:487; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 3:198-99; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:78-9; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:37; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 2:46.

²⁷¹⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 5:68-9; Ibn Zūbul, *Ta’rīkh*, 25. Other notable members of the Cairo religious landscape were in attendance such as the servant (*khādim*) of the shrine of Sayyida Nafīsa, masters (*khulafā’*) of the shrines of Aḥmad al-Badawī and Aḥmad ibn al-Rifā‘ī and members of the Qadariyya *ṭarīqa*. See also: Sümer, “Yavuz Selim,” 347-8; Petry, *Twilight of Majesty*, 224; Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte: historiens et conquérants au XVIe siècle* (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), 1-2.

popular religion.²⁷¹⁸ A circle of fourteenth century Syrian scholars, mostly the students of Ibn Taymiyya, strongly disapproved of many popular spiritual practices.²⁷¹⁹ Nevertheless, both the Mamluk rulers and many of their subjects enjoyed a mystically-inclined religiosity and were fond of visiting the tombs of saints. As rulers the Mamluk sultans were equally proud of sheltering the caliph and ruling over the most important holy places, which alongside their patronage of Sufi institutions, was projected as devotion and service to Islam.²⁷²⁰

Overall, Mamluk rule was noteworthy (though hardly unique in Islamdom) for its deference to holy men, particularly the Sufi masters whom the sultans courted through endowing *khānqāhs* that promoted a moderate Sufism in accordance with the *sharīʿa*.²⁷²¹ The Mamluks, like the Mongols, respected the power of shaman-like individuals, including Sufi *shaykhs*, *sayyids*, notables possessing a sacred lineage, as well as holy men like the *ʿulamāʾ* and the Abbasid caliph.²⁷²² Given the attentiveness of Mamluk sultans and amirs to popular religious practices, we may tentatively suggest that Mamluk court culture, with its reverence for living holy men, may have retained at least some memory of the pre-Islamic indigenous religions of the steppe lands they originated from.²⁷²³

In this context, a shaman was “the central religious specialist charged with the deepest knowledge in the community of both practical and theoretical religion.”²⁷²⁴ Spending much time in seclusion, (not unlike the caliphs of Cairo), he was thought to have access to a universe inaccessible to laymen. For the uninitiated masses, the shaman provided the exclusive entry

²⁷¹⁸ Ulrich Haarmann, “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33, no. 1 (1988): 100; Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 248-57; idem, “Mamluk Religious Policy,” 18.

²⁷¹⁹ Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle Against Popular Religion* (The Hague, 1976). See also: Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafisa,” 38; Donald P. Little, “Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?” *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975): 94; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 67-9; Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority*, 91-3.

²⁷²⁰ Schimmel, “Some Glimpses,” 384; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 12-6.

²⁷²¹ Northrup, “The Bahārī Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1390,” 270.

²⁷²² In the religious experiences and expectations of Muslims of all social classes in this period, focus was often placed on highly reputed individuals, holy men, known for their learning, saintliness, or pious character. These figures, sometimes operating outside the official channels of the *ʿulamāʾ*, enjoyed the ability to negotiate the various strata of society and were thought by common people to be able to offer “intercession and mediation both with God and with the established authorities,” even if the jurisprudential version of the faith supported by orthodox Sunni Muslim theologians discounted this as a possibility. See: Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 24; Berkey, *Formation of Islam*, 250; idem, “Mamluks as Muslims,” 163. On the similar Islamizing role of Sufis among the Ilkhanids, see: Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 1 (1999): 27-46.

²⁷²³ Devin DeWeese has attempted some explanation of the religious landscape of pre-Islamic Inner Asia. See: *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (Penn State Press, 1994), 27-50.

²⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

through which an ordinary person experienced “the wealth of souls [and/or] elaborate cosmological structures.”²⁷²⁵

Did the Mamluks also come to view the caliphs as cosmic figures with power over supernatural events, or more like a popular religious leader such as a *bābā* or a *shaykh*? The answer lies somewhere in between. In any case, many of their contemporaries had an understanding that the caliphs were the repositories of special powers.²⁷²⁶ Hoping to link his descendants to the Abbasids, Baybars also buried two of his infant sons in Cairo’s Abbasid mausoleum, perhaps hoping that they would be honored and receive *baraka* by virtue of their burial near holy men of noble pedigree.²⁷²⁷

Yet another possible indicator reflecting the Turco-Mongolian past of the Mamluks is that there appears to be no report of a Mamluk sultan ever executing or shedding the sacred blood of an Abbasid caliph in their custody, despite the numerous reports of physical mistreatment and deposition. The Mamluk establishment always maintained a degree of awe of the caliphs’ bloodline, and deemed it dangerous (and harmful to public opinion) to physically harm “the successor of God on the earth.” While much of the evidence remains circumstantial, it appears that some sultans strived to remain on the good side of the caliphate, perhaps for fear of the supernatural power of the prayers of a holy man against their reigns. Faced with declining political fortunes in 791/1389 Barqūq begged the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil not to be upset with him for having been imprisoned for six years.²⁷²⁸ Al-Ẓāhir Ṭaṭar took pains to reverse the sanctions of the caliph al-Musta‘īn by Shaykh in 824/1421.²⁷²⁹ Likewise, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī set right perceived wrongs against the caliph al-Mustamsik whom he had dismissed for having bad eyesight, because of worry, so we are told, that the caliph was “upset” with him. Such gestures may have had more to do with stroking public opinion or reconciling Mamluk factions at court sensibilities; nevertheless, they also reflected a fear of offending one of Islam’s holiest of holies.

Caliphal authority in the Mamluk period proved highly flexible. In addition to its role among Mamluk officialdom, the Abbasids participated in popular religious traditions such as *mawlid* festivals celebrating the birth of the Prophet, Sufi practices at the shrine of Sayyida

²⁷²⁵ Ibid., 35-7.

²⁷²⁶ This was hardly a new phenomenon, as al-‘Abbās himself had been thought to have powers sufficient to summon the rain which he passed on to his descendants.

²⁷²⁷ Both children died early in the career of Baybars: Anas Bay in 664/1266 and ‘Umar in 668/1269. The inscriptions on both tombs name them “child martyrs” and include *qasīm amīr al-mu‘minīn* among the titles honoring their father. *RCEA*, 12, no. 4552 and 4608. See also: Rogers, “Rapport,” 28.

²⁷²⁸ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:266; Ibn Hajar, *Inbā’ al-ghumr*, 2:344; ‘Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Jawharī ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa-al-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān* (Cairo, 1970), 1:189; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i*, 1:2:396-7.

²⁷²⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 4:2:587; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal*, 7:63; al-Malaṭī, *Nayl al-amal*, 4:99; al-Sakhāwī, *Ḍaw’*, 4:20.

Nafīsa, and funerary rites to mark the deaths of popular sultans like Qālāwūn.²⁷³⁰ The caliph might also allude to astrological divination at a popular address or citadel *khutba*. Nevertheless, there remained some tension over what the caliphate ought to represent: Ibn Ḥijja boldly declares in the 825/1422 investiture deed for Barsbāy that the caliph will not be corrupted by folk understandings of faith and will give preference only to the Qur’ān and *sunna*.²⁷³¹

Abbasid caliphs and Sufi masters alike offered themselves to the regime as fonts of charisma (*baraka*). In the context of public prayer ceremonies to combat drought, plague, or to gear up for an impending battle, the caliph was one religious personality among others to offer his prayers. In times of crisis, the Mamluk sultans did not discriminate between competing brands of religious legitimacy and were often anxious to hurl the power of *any* kind of holy man in an emergency, hoping that God might alleviate the most recent emergency.

In short, the Mamluks courted and patronized all forms of spiritual charisma to lend spiritual power to their politics. The caliphs represented a more orthodox-friendly form of spiritual charisma which had important precedent and links to Islamic tradition, but which was not without significance in more popular expressions of Islam. Significantly, Abbasid authority, like *ṭarīqa* Sufism, was universally recognized and promoted as a symbol by the religious class of the regime. Sufis on the other hand, were suppliers of a more ecstatic and unpredictable charisma which had more appeal and considerable influence with the population, but was not always as easily subject to the whims of a sultan the way a closely-guarded and easily controllable puppet caliph might be.

4. The Caliphate and the Religious Establishment: The ‘Ulamā’ and the Caliphs

Evidence suggests that the Abbasid caliph of Cairo, frequently at the urging of Mamluk leadership, took steps to approach his role as chief religious functionary, albeit in a limited capacity. After their separate investitures, both caliphs al-Mustanṣir and al-Ḥākim delivered *khutbas* and participated in congregational prayers at the mosque of the citadel. Later caliphs represented the religious countenance of the regime both on campaign and in diplomatic correspondence to fellow Muslim rulers by lending their names to warnings, Mamluk accession announcements, and investiture deeds issued to the Muslim princes who requested them, all pending the approval of the Mamluk sultan.

²⁷³⁰ Schimmel, “Kalif und Kadi,” 77-8; Rāgib, “Al-Sayyida Nafīsa,” 38; Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue,” 17. The learned class was hardly uniform in its acceptance or reproach of popular religious practices. See: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 67; Berkey, “Culture and Society,” 404-6; idem, “Mamluks as Muslims,” 166-7. On Mamluk ‘*ulamā*’ who supported both popular shrine practices and tomb visitation (*ziyāra*), see: Tetsuya, “Cairene Cemeteries,” 97-9.

²⁷³¹ Ibn Ḥijja, *Qahwat al-inshā*, 368-9.

Within the confines of the Mamluk sultanate the two most important foundations of religious authority remained the Abbasid caliphs and the *'ulamā'*, the established spiritual elite connected to the regime. In speaking collectively of the "Mamluk *'ulamā'*," we must acknowledge that they were a broad class whose occupations included those of jurists, imams, teachers, reciters of the Qur'ān, Sufis, mosque functionaries, ḥadīth experts, and others -- with many performing several functions at once. They were connected through religious learning, but subdivided by wealth, status, and occupation.²⁷³² The caliph, for all intents and purposes, existed as an important symbol with little power while the *'ulamā'* wielded actual influence in their attempts to set limits for the sultanate according to *sharī'a* and jurisprudential precedence.²⁷³³ Even so, the *'ulamā'* for their part were obliged to respect the caliphate as an important attribute of Islamic tradition and a revitalizing source of their own authority.

For the *'ulamā'*, however, the caliphate was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it legitimized the position of *all* religious functionaries and presented the Mamluk regime as an Islamic polity worthy of succeeding the well-remembered Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad. Conversely, the prospect of a popular resident Abbasid caliph posed a latent threat to the collective strength of their own religious authority.²⁷³⁴

The caliphal restoration in Cairo set forth the Mamluk regime as a governing apparatus presumed to be on sound footing in accordance with Islamic law. It therefore behooved religious authorities to promote allegiance to the caliphate as a major requirement of Islamic rule, in part to maintain the caliphate's importance in Islamic tradition as well as to answer the mounting pressure for a means of legitimation to service the Mamluks. The *'ulamā'*, supplying a link between theology and social practice,²⁷³⁵ therefore at least paid lip service to the understanding that the caliphate was indispensable to the ongoing success of the regime and integral to its maintenance. The Mamluks thus adopted this position and consistently retained the caliph as a cornerstone of their public celebrations and succession rituals.²⁷³⁶

²⁷³² Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*, 107-8, 113-5; Petry, *Civilian Elite*, 312-3; Lev, "Symbiotic Relations," 1.

²⁷³³ Despite their moral authority, the *'ulamā'* were largely unable to command obedience on their own and relied on the state to enforce legal decisions. The *'ulamā'* received authority to litigate in civil matters between Muslims and interpret holy law and scripture, which in some cases, delivered an advantage over the ruling elite. See: Holt, "Structure of Government," 59; Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 314-5; Berkey, "Culture and Society," 393.

²⁷³⁴ The coexistence of the caliphate and the religious class in Cairo may have been uneasy at times. Some scholars appear to have been worried that the introduction of a new caliph in Cairo might result in confusion and loss of their own influence. See: Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāḥīn al-mamālīk*, 1:33; Jackson, "From Prophetic Action to Constitutional Theory," 81-2.

²⁷³⁵ Lev, "Symbiotic Relations," 21.

²⁷³⁶ In awe of the reverence which the masses held the *'ulamā'* in, the Mamluks maintained a policy of conciliation towards religious scholars and did their best to accommodate them. See: Sartain, *Al-Suyūṭī*, 13.

Although tied primarily to noteworthy events associated with the regime, caliphal participation in Mamluk religious life made it exceptional.²⁷³⁷ Throughout the Mamluk period, the *'ulamā'* interacted with the caliphate in several important ways. Dual investiture ceremonies of sultans and caliphs began under Baybars with the *'ulamā'* confirming the caliph's pedigree and Abbasid lineage, overseeing the proper execution of the *bay'a*, and aiding in the composition of relevant documents. Incorporating and co-opting the important recognized religious authorities of the time as officiators at the *bay'a* ceremonies encouraged widespread acceptance of the caliphate and presented the regime with a way to publicly involve the *'ulamā'* and provide the state and its secular proceedings with Islamic coloring.²⁷³⁸

Although many sultans trusted members of the religious class to visit the caliphs without incident, they remained suspicious of other mamlūks or military personnel making similar visits. Mamluk sultans assigned scholars to train the caliphs in Islamic sciences and allowed them to participate in scholarly salons. Some notable families intermarried with the Abbasids, allied their interests to various caliphal candidates or attempted to influence a sitting caliph when possible.²⁷³⁹ It is also worth mentioning that many scholars stood to gain monetarily from proximity to the caliphs whether through patronage for their writings or vocational appointments facilitated by caliphal recommendation. In the cases of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and al-Suyūfī, both of whom enjoyed Abbasid patronage, emotional testimonies betray hints of loyalty to the caliphate beyond its status as a vital religious institution. We would be remiss to say none of this concerned individual careers and opportunism. There can be no doubt that scholars, just like individual mamlūks, harbored an interest in their own material advancement, some more than others.

Whenever a caliph died, the chief qadis, as visible representatives of the religious establishment, aided the transition process by ratifying a successor and in many cases arranging the caliph's funerary procession, prayers, and interment.²⁷⁴⁰

For members of the *'ulamā'*, access to the caliphs was not without immediate benefit. Lectureships in mosques and *madrasas* were a prestigious and lucrative source of income for many qadis and other religious figures.²⁷⁴¹ In a practice known as *nuzūl*, many position-holders often wished to pass their lectureship or office down to a son or other relative. Because *nuzūl*

²⁷³⁷ Chapoutot-Remadi, "Une institution mal connue," 18.

²⁷³⁸ Lev, "Symbiotic Relations," 14; Hassan, "Loss of Caliphate," 149.

²⁷³⁹ Marriage within the Abbasid family was by no means exclusive to members of the *'ulamā'*. Many minor amirs also married Abbasid princesses. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 14:319-21, al-Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 12:54-5; idem, *Wajīz*, 2:874; Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 79; idem, "Some Glimpses," 354.

²⁷⁴⁰ Schimmel, "Kalif und Kadi," 72, 75; Chapoutot-Remadi, "Une institution mal connue," 17.

²⁷⁴¹ Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 250-3.

could not be legally enforced, an office-holder might attempt to approach the Abbasid caliph or the Mamluk sultan to court official support in strengthening their choice for succession.²⁷⁴²

The Mamluks flaunted access to the caliph, but put forth “the more obvious identification of Islam with the estate of the ‘*ulamā*’ as its *official* [emphasis added] representatives.”²⁷⁴³ Although the religious establishment largely withheld support for any increase of the caliph’s political power, some scholars were sympathetic to the weakened caliphate and wished it to redeem its former grandeur, while others maintained their caution, perhaps fretful that excess authority for the Abbasid caliph might threaten their own role as “guardians of Islam,” a hard-won status gained by their predecessors who had resisted the Mu‘tazilī-leaning Abbasid caliphs of the ninth century.

Permitted to hobnob with representatives of the jurisprudential Islam of the ‘*ulamā*’ as well as participate in the more popular Islam of the masses, the caliphs contributed to the mutual understanding between the religious establishment and the political administration and thereby achieved relevance in both spheres. For their part, the ‘*ulamā*’ in practice did little to acknowledge the caliph’s theoretical position as leader of the “men of religion” (*arbāb al-‘amā’im*) and neglected to consult or defer to him on religious matters. Nevertheless, the caliph, physically at any rate, was on hand to play his part, not necessarily as a leader of Islam, but as the leader of the Muslims.²⁷⁴⁴

The Mamluk ruling elite and the ‘*ulamā*’ remained keenly aware of the inherent religious authority of the caliphal office which they alone had power to manipulate for their own interests. It was something unique to the Abbasid family, however, which could not be removed and which proved itself indispensable in the world of Mamluk politics.²⁷⁴⁵ Abbasid authority, such as it was, primarily furnished the Mamluk system with political legitimacy but was irrevocably tied to religion and only existed because of the traditional religiosity it symbolized and conveyed.

In their own right, the ‘*ulamā*’ as a whole were a political force distinct from the Mamluks, functioning as the spiritual guides for the military elite and the guarantors of orthodoxy.²⁷⁴⁶ Approval of the religious establishment, in addition to allegiance to the caliph, was also a source of legitimacy for the Mamluks. The ‘*ulamā*’ received a very free hand from the

²⁷⁴² Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 94-5.

²⁷⁴³ Arjomand, “Legitimacy and Political Organisation,” 252.

²⁷⁴⁴ Mājid, *Nuẓum dawlat salāṭīn al-mamālīk*, 1:33.

²⁷⁴⁵ Rallying to the caliph’s cause became a popular *cause célèbre* on numerous occasions in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century.

²⁷⁴⁶ Members of the ‘*ulamā*’, though relegated to a subordinate capacity, enjoyed influence with the sultans primarily as religious advisors. As the official interpreters of religious law, they were, however, able to finagle a degree of independent power “through an elaborate religio-academic network that they controlled by manipulating appointments and promotions.” Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*, 315.

Mamluks and it was in their interest to preserve the status quo. If plans to reestablish the caliphate had been a joint “project” undertaken by the leaders and approved of and directed in some ways by the ‘*ulamā*’, there was likely some tension over the ownership.

As late as the early sixteenth century, there was still debate as to what the caliph should be and what powers and influence he should have.²⁷⁴⁷ One side was exemplified by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and al-Suyūṭī, who wanted to uphold the classical rights of the caliphs and enjoyed access to them, including visiting, trading gifts, and exchanging poetry. Al-Suyūṭī sought an increase to the power of the caliphs that would have given them higher authority than the four chief qadis of Cairo -- an idea highly unpopular with the ‘*ulamā*’, even though it might not have conflicted with the Mamluk agenda.²⁷⁴⁸

In slightly more opposition to this view were the likes of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Maqrīzī, who recognized the obligatory nature of the caliphate at least nominally, but for the time being preferred to place their faith in the office of the sultan and his delegates while hypothetically awaiting the final return of a Rāshidūn-style government. What might be read as their cynicism or detachment from the contemporary caliphate may well have been a mask for their disappointment with the Abbasid caliphs of their day and the dominance of secular sovereignty (*mulk*).

Thus, the Abbasid caliph of Cairo, “despite his marginal influence on the political affairs of the day, was still a prominent religious-political figure among the scholarly elite and the populace of the two urban centers of the Mamluk empire -- Cairo and Damascus -- [and] faithfulness to the caliphate in their circles was regarded as a sign of outstanding piety.”²⁷⁴⁹ Indeed, outward fidelity to such an iconic religious figure provided members of the ‘*ulamā*’ with an easy means to display their own credibility, which, after all, was the foundation of the status which the regime allowed them to enjoy.²⁷⁵⁰

III. Closing Remarks

As Robert Irwin has observed, modern historians read Mamluk politics with a great degree of cynicism, concluding most often that greed, power, arrogance, or fear accounted for the

²⁷⁴⁷ Indeed this question is as old as the caliphate itself. See: Sourdél, “*Khalīfah*”; Hugh N. Kennedy, “The ‘Abbasid Caliphate: A Historical Introduction,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Abbasid Belles Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-2.

²⁷⁴⁸ Chapoutot-Remadi, “Une institution mal connue,” 18. Al-Suyūṭī appeared to desire that the caliphs have power, yet refrain from daily political life. In his work on this subject, Garcin has explored the question of whether al-Suyūṭī was alone in thinking this, or if he was supported by a certain part of public opinion. See: “Histoire,” 65-88.

²⁷⁴⁹ Wiederhold, “Zahiri Revolt,” 215.

²⁷⁵⁰ Petry, *Civilian Elite*, 320.

only reasonable or conceivable driving factors.²⁷⁵¹ In writing about the Mamluk attitude towards the Abbasid caliphate it is difficult to sidestep the extreme suspicion that has clouded our understanding of the Mamluk sultans and their policies.

It is not easy to argue that for contemporary observers, the caliphate lost *all* of its actual power throughout the span of the sultanate. Even if its profile decreased and other modes of legitimacy came to the fore, such as the consensus of the Cairo amirs, the cooperation of the Qalawunid puppet-sultan, or protection of the holy cities, the Abbasid caliphate was never entirely eliminated from the Mamluk political scene, nor would it have been easy to remove.

Some historians point out that the Abbasid caliphate of Cairo received only intermittent recognition from other contemporary Muslim rulers,²⁷⁵² but within Cairo we can say that it enjoyed a strong allegiance because it was locally promoted as an important part of the regime's culture. Even when individual sultans seemed to care little about the Abbasid caliphate as an institution, they dared not say so in public. Other scholars have advised against dismissing the personal piety of the Mamluk sultans, while also remaining cautiously aware that legitimation was a real factor in light of their pagan birth and slave origins.²⁷⁵³ While little was left to the caliph of tangible religious or political authority, his presence was an undeniable force on the political scene. If we must be consigned to the image cultivated by decades of scholarship that refer to the Abbasids of Cairo as "shadow caliphs" despite the palpable resonance they appear to have had in the fabric of Mamluk society, it is worth remembering that religious authority, although "ordered but contested,"²⁷⁵⁴ resides in places which it is perceived to exist. Thus the "shadow" cast by the caliphs of Cairo, was indeed a large one.

After the Ottomans freed al-Mutawakkil III from Istanbul and permitted his return to Cairo, both the caliph and the office occupied by his family for nearly eight centuries, faded into obscurity. In subsequent years the Ottomans made inconsistent use of the notion of a universal caliphate: during the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent (926-74/1520-66), after the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 and in the last century under the pan-Islamic rhetoric and tone of the reign of the Ottoman sultan-"caliph" Abdülhamid II (1293-1327/1876-1909).²⁷⁵⁵

²⁷⁵¹ Robert Irwin, "The Political Thinking of the "Virtuous Ruler," Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2008): 37.

²⁷⁵² John E. Woods, *The Aqqayunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 7.

²⁷⁵³ Schimmel, "Some Glimpses," 356-61; Northrup, "The Bahārī Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1390," 255-7, 269; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 12.

²⁷⁵⁴ Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority*, 8.

²⁷⁵⁵ On Ottoman understandings of caliphate, see: Arnold, *Caliphate*, 129-38; Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press, 1973), 33-4; idem, "Appendix: The Ottomans and the Caliphate," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 1, eds. P. M. Holt, Ann K. S.

Scholars such as Marshall Hodgson, John Voll, and Richard Bulliet have attempted to illustrate how the growing importance of the *hajj* and the organizational powers of Sufism went on to supersede the caliphate as a unifying force during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the wider Muslim world. At least in Mamluk territory, particularly Greater Cairo, the caliphate retained a modicum of significance for much of the Later Middle Period.

Bulliet, who has recently suggested separating the political history of Islam from the history of the *umma*, has argued that after 1258, it was in fact the pilgrimage which replaced the caliphate as the binding center of the community and focus of religious life.²⁷⁵⁶ Organization and protection of the pilgrimage had previously been the prestigious prerogative of the Abbasid caliphate, while later rulers such as the Ayyubids, Mamluks, and later Ottomans, took pride in ruling as the “Servitor of the Two Holy Cities” (*khādīm al-ḥaramayn*) which for the sultans seemed a more exceptional title than caliph.²⁷⁵⁷ Thus it is argued that the military rulers may well have outgrown the importance of the caliphate in favor of finding legitimacy by way of promoting their protection of the Muslim community and its rite of pilgrimage to Islam’s holy cities.²⁷⁵⁸ Further catering to this interest, the Mamluks invented ceremonies, in which, often garbed in Abbasid black, they sent the *kiswa* (a woven garment for the Ka’ba) and *maḥmal* (a ceremonial saddled camel) to lead the pilgrimage caravan from Cairo as well as sent gifts and banners for the rulers of the Hījāz.²⁷⁵⁹

Lambton, and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 320-3; Halil Inalcik and Günsel Renda (eds.), *Ottoman Civilization* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture, 2003), 1:107-9; Gilles Veinstein, “La question du califat ottoman,” in *Le choc colonial et l’islam: les politiques religieuses des puissances coloniales en terres d’islam*, ed. Pierre-Jean Luizard (Paris: Découverte, 2006), 451-68.

²⁷⁵⁶ Bulliet, “Muslim South,” 61; idem, “Neo-Mamluk Legitimacy,” 62-3. Voll notes that in this period, the community was emphasized, synthesized, and transcended boundaries by virtue of the Sufi *ṭarīqas* and the pilgrimage. See: “Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System,” 11-2.

²⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. On the mosque, see: *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum Arabicarum*. Première partie. Égypte. *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire* t. 19 fasc. 3 (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1979), 413-21; Becker, “Barthold’s Studien,” 401-6; Arnold, *Caliphate*, 145, 152-3; Gilles Veinstein, “Le serviteur des deux saints sanctuaires et ses *maḥmal*. Des mamelouks aux ottomans,” *Turcica* 41 (2009): 229-33; Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*, 289-91.

²⁷⁵⁸ Bulliet, “Neo-Mamluk Legitimacy,” 63-4.

²⁷⁵⁹ Ibid. See also: Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 70-3; Behrens-Abouseif, “*Maḥmal* Legend,” 90; idem, “Qāyṭbāy’s Foundation in Medina, the *Madrasah*, the *Ribāt*, and the *Dashīshah*,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 61. The ceremonial practices became important enough that the Ottomans adopted them later on. See: Veinstein, “Le serviteur,” 234-41. In the development of his own notions of kingship, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was concerned with demonstrating his proximity to the pilgrimage. (See: Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 100). It is also noteworthy that in one of the sultan’s investiture documents, the author, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Qaysarānī, discusses the similarity between the pious performance of the pilgrimage and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s acceptance of the caliphal honor. For the scribe, the caliph’s selection of the sultan is an honor on par with a pilgrim going to the Ka’ba and having his prayers answered by God at the “Yamanī corner” of the structure. Al-Qaysarānī evokes other aspects of the Islamic pilgrimage and ties them to the caliphal investiture such as the *bayt al-ma’mūr* (the heavenly analogue of the Ka’ba) as well as the Prophet’s mosque in Medina. See: al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 10:66.

The harsh reality of the curtailment of the caliphal office in Mamluk times has distracted modern scholars from the fact that the caliph remained an imposing, even potentially dangerous presence, shrouded at the Mamluk court in mystique and enigma, much in the way his forbears had been surrounded by chamberlains and winding corridors at the height of the dynasty's power in Baghdad.

The more one ruminates upon notions of "state" in the pre-modern Middle East, the more intangible they become.²⁷⁶⁰ Nevertheless, a well-known and abiding aphorism, *Islām dawla wa-dīn*, implies that Islam is both state and religion.²⁷⁶¹ In Mamluk society, the caliph represented an Islamic ideal, which if ever absent, left a conspicuous void in the core of the political system as well as the self-perception of the *umma*. The caliph, in his symbolic capacity, represented the integration of the concepts of *dīn* and *dawla*, or religious salvation and earthly order and prosperity.²⁷⁶² The Mamluks, and similarly the Ottomans, Timurids, and other Islamic dynasties may have constructed huge mosque complexes and structures which conveyed not only notions of dynasty and empire, but also profound spirituality. The Mamluk sultanate's patronage of the Abbasid caliphate, no matter what the "realities" of its actual position, symbolized Mamluk supremacy within and beyond their static borders, but more importantly it symbolized their upholding of religion which the '*ulamā*' trumpeted as a demonstration of Cairo's ability to eclipse all other rival Muslim kingdoms.

The status of the caliphate in Mamluk society came to be accepted by the political community as well as the masses. Theoretically, the *umma* carried the responsibility for perpetuating Islamic society, and the caliphate only supplied itself as a function of the community, its common objectives and collective duties embodied in a single office-holder.²⁷⁶³ Thus, the significance of the Abbasid caliphate remained undisputed in Mamluk society as a constant in a world of shifting political variables, particularly the roiling factions of local Cairene politics.

²⁷⁶⁰ Fred M. Donner, "The Formation of the Islamic State," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 2 (1986): 283. For some discussion of the concept of "state" in the Mamluk context, see: Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 59-60.

²⁷⁶¹ Berkey, "Mamluk Religious Policy," 7.

²⁷⁶² I thank Stephen Humphreys for this observation on my 2011 MESA paper.

²⁷⁶³ H. A. R. Gibb, "Constitutional Organization," in *Law in the Middle East*, Vol. 1, *The Origin and Development of Islamic Law*, ed. Majid Khadduri and Herbert Liebensy (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 3-4; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 2:114-5; Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 4-6.

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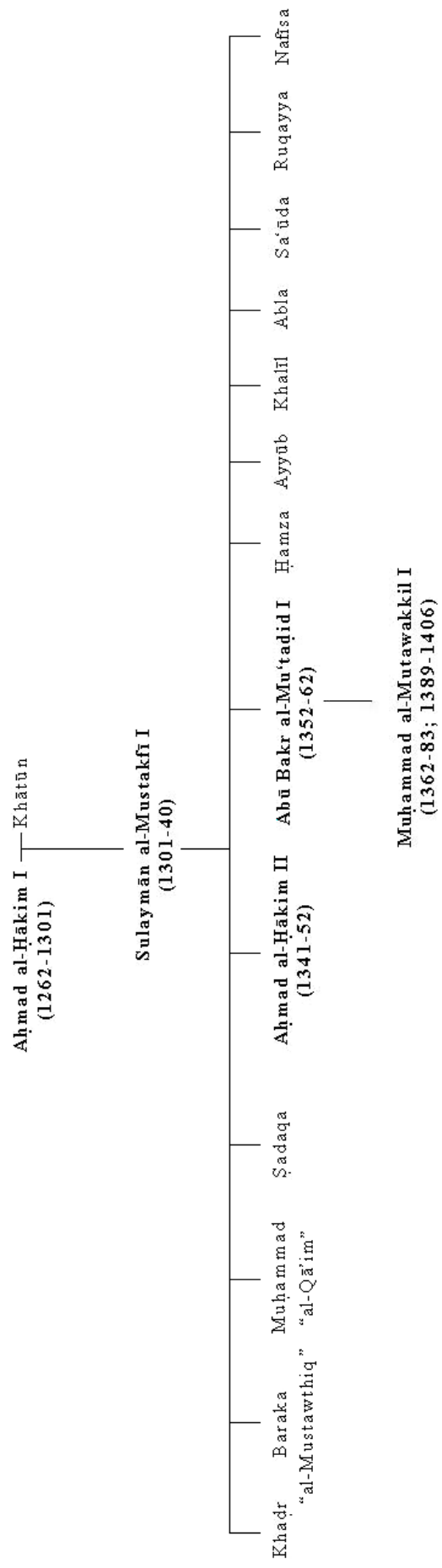


Fig. 1: Descendants of al-Mustakfi I

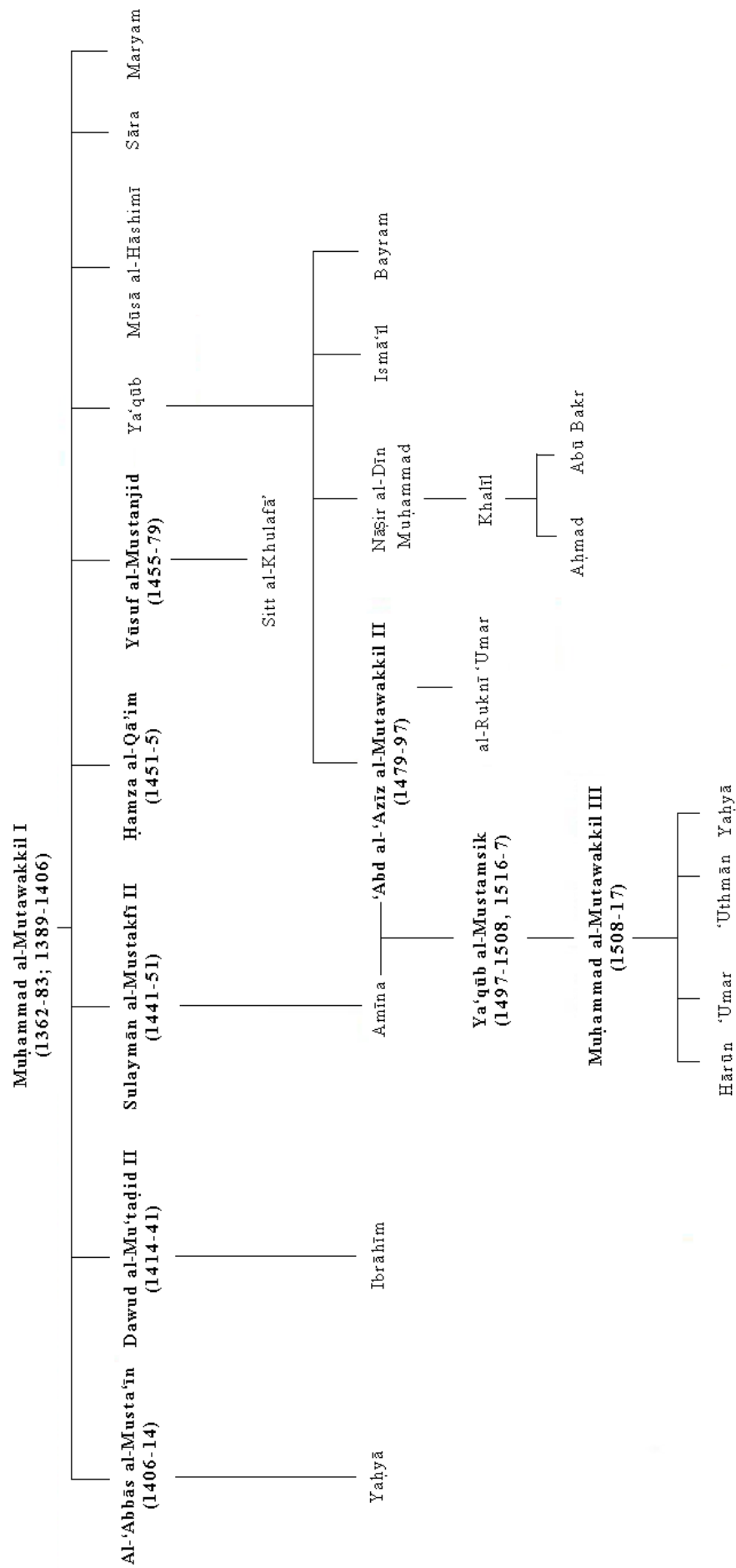


Fig. 2: Descendants of al-Mutawakkil I